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THE  
WORKS

Of the LEARNED

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE, D.D.

Rector of St. LAWRENCE JEWRY,  
LONDON.



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VOLUME IV.

ABERDEEN:

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T H E

# W O R K S

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BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE, D.D.



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# CONTENTS.

## VOL. IV.

### DISCOURSE LXXI. LXXII. LXXIII.

Whatsoever things are just.—Phil. iv. 8. *Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.* page 1. 20. 36.

### DISCOURSE LXXIV.

Whatsoever things are holy.—*From the same text.* p. 54.

### DISCOURSE LXXV.

Whatsoever things are lovely.—*From the same text.* p. 84.

### DISCOURSE LXXVI.

Whatsoever things are of good report.—*From the same text.* p. 107.

### DISCOURSE LXXVII.

If there be any virtue.—*From the same text.* p. 119.

### DISCOURSE LXXVIII.

If there be any praise.—*From the same text.* p. 131.

### DISCOURSE LXXIX.

Think on these things.—*From the same text.* p. 137.

### DISCOURSE LXXX.

The importance of forgiveness of sin, and its certainty to the penitent.—Acts xiii. 38. *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sin.* p. 155.

### DISCOURSE LXXXI.

The great benefits that accrue to us by our Saviour's being in our nature.—Acts xiii. 23. *Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.* p. 176.

### DISCOURSE LXXXII.

The obligations and advantages of good-will.—Eph. iv. 31, 32. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour,*

## C O N T E N T S.

*clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* p. 198.

### DISCOURSE LXXXIII.

The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit — 1 Pet. iii.

*4. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price.* p. 220.

### DISCOURSE LXXXIV.

The effect, intent, and issue of religion. — Psal. xviii.

*21, 22, 23. For I have kept the ways of the Lord: and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me: and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him: and I kept myself from mine iniquity.* p. 237.

### DISCOURSE LXXXV. LXXXVI. LXXXVII.

Men have nothing to glory of, but religion — Jer ix.

*23, 24. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.* p. 265, 279, 296.

### DISCOURSE LXXXVIII. LXXXIX. XC.

God hateth wickedness. — Psalm v. 4, 5. *Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity.* p. 324, 333, 343.

### DISCOURSE XCI.

The great matters of religion. *From the same text.*

p. 351.

### DISCOURSE XCII. XCIII. XCIV. XCV. XCVI.

### XCVII.

The great instances of wickedness. — *From the same text.*

p. 362, 373, 394, 405, 414, 425.

The Prayer.

p. 439.

DIS-

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## DISCOURSE LXXI.

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*Whatsoever things are just.*

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PHIL. iv. 8.

*Whatsoever things are just.*

**O**UR *English* translation is a little too short for the *Greek*; the word in the *Greek* doth comprehend two things; that which in our *English* language we call *just*, and that which we call *equal*. *Justice* and *equity*, I know often times are indifferently used for the self-same thing; but if we speak strictly and exactly, then they are to be distinguished: for whatsoever either reason or law will admit, that may pass for *just*; but *equity* will take all things into consideration, that do accompany the case; and if the case require it, *equity* will abate of that which strict *right* will afford. Therefore we say that what we call *equity*, is to moderate strict *right*: and indeed strict *right* may be down-right injury and wrong; but *equity* is the moderator.

Sometimes you have *just*, and no *equity* on the other side; and then *just* is all in all. But *just* is not *right*, if there be *equity* on the other side. For where there is *equity* in the case, *equity* rules, and *just* vails. Strict *right* is not to be stood upon by persons of reason and conscience, where *equity* calls



## C O N T E N T S.

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### DISCOURSE LXXXIII.

The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit — 1 Pet. iii. 4. *The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price.* p. 220.

### DISCOURSE LXXXIV.

The effect, intent, and issue of religion. — Psal. xviii. 21, 22, 23. *For I have kept the ways of the Lord: and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me: and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him: and I kept myself from mine iniquity.* p. 237.

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Men have nothing to glory of, but religion — Jer ix. 23, 24. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.* p. 265 279 296.

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The great matters of religion. *From the same text.* p. 351.

### DISCOURSE XCII. XCIII. XCIV. XCV. XCVI. XCVII.

The great instances of wickedness. — *From the same text.* p. 362 373 394 405 414 425.

The Prayer. p. 439.

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Sometimes you have *just*, and no *equity* on the other side; and then *just* is all in all. But *just* is not *right*, if there be *equity* on the other side. For where there is *equity* in the case, *equity* rules, and *just* vails. Strict *right* is not to be stood upon by persons of reason and conscience, where *equity* calls

for another thing. For when we consider what we ourselves owe to God, how much we are beholden to him and how much we depend upon his grace; and when we think upon ourselves as christians, as relieved by Christ, and what thereby we are enjoined by our Saviour towards our brethren; then (I say) it will not become us to appear in the defence of strict right, where equity is on the other side; without moderation, clemency, compassion and dealing with our brethren as we ourselves are dealt withal by God. And when we shall thus consider, we shall find it necessary to abate of that which we call *our due*. It is this that the apostle chargeth upon us in the 5th verse of this chapter, where the word that is translated *moderation* (*let your moderation be known to all men*) is *let your equity, your candor, your ingenuity, your fair dealing, your giving allowance to all things considerable in a case*; let this be known. And I am sure if we do not thus use this fairness and candor, but stand upon strict right, and upon the utmost terms that possibly we may demand; we not only depart from the nobleness and ingenuity of a gospel-spirit, but we take a course that a cancelled obligation may return upon us. And upon this consideration I offer to you the case in the xviiiith of *Matthew*, from the 23d to the 35th verse; where you have a parable of a lord that had forgiven to his servant a debt; this man hath a fellow-servant that was indebted to him, he falls upon his debtor with violence, uses extremity, and will abate nothing, not remembring what his lord had forgiven him; but his lord calls him to an account and was wroth with him, and delivered him  
to

to the tormenters till he should pay all that he was due unto him. Our Saviour meant thus : we ourselves are greatly indebted to God, we pray for pardon and forgiveness and for grace, and we do obtain it ; and God doth expect that we should expresse the sense thereof, by dealing with others tenderly and compassionately ; if we do not, we provoke God to deliver us over to punishment : *so likewise shall my heavenly father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* Let a man therefore take heed ; for sins that were in a fair tendency toward forgiveness, may return upon a man by his extremity. I am sure we expect other measure from God in all our deprecations. *Psalms cxxx. 4. there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared.* And the ciii. Psalm hath many verses together, highly to be valued and considered by us all. It begins at the 8th verse ; *the lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.* ver. 9. *he will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever.* ver. 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquity.* ver. 11. *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.* ver. 12. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* ver. 13. *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* ver. 14. *For he knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are dust.* ver. 15. *As for man, his days are as grass : as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.* ver. 16. *For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.* ver. 17. *But the mercy*



*of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto childrens children, &c.* It is not possible that any man should read this scripture and consider it, and reflect upon himself and think how much it is his own case, how much he is indebted to God; but he must needs think himself obliged to all acts of clemency, of forbearance and forgiveness, all pity and compassion; for thus God is to all sinners, and we are all sinners before him; and can we expect this from God, and express ourselves quite contrary towards our fellow-creatures? In *Dan. ix. 16. Daniel prayeth; O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee let thine anger and thy fury be turned away, &c.* Observe how the septuagint glosses upon these words, *according to all thy righteousness*; thus the septuagint, *according to thy benignity, clemency and compassion.* God's righteousness we expect in such a conjunction, *Psalms li. 1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.* *Nehemiah ix. 32. Now therefore our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepeth covenant and mercy.* So that he is very little mindful of the weakness and infirmity of human nature, who is not moved to bowels of pity and compassion, and fair and equal consideration: he doth not consider how much he is engaged to God, nor doth he consider the infirmities of human nature, that doth not afford fair allowance. *Psalms cxlv. 7. Men shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.* verse 8. *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger,*  
*and*

*and of great mercy. verse 9. The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.* I have said enough to engage all men to measure strict right by that which we call ingenuous, noble, equal, fair. Let us afford one another the measure that we our selves depend upon and expect from divine goodness, or we are undone for ever.

Now to speak to my argument. Two things lie before me to show you.

1. *The rule and measure of just and equal.*

2. *The difference between these two, what is just, and what is equal.* There is that which may be called just and right; of which if a man will abate nothing, the law will allow it; it may be done and another cannot hinder it, nor none can call him an unrighteous person if he will have it. And there is that which is equal and fit and good to be done, and which becomes a good man to do. This distinction you have in *Rom. v. 7.* where the apostle calls one a *righteous man*, and another a *good man*: *for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some will even dare to die.* The *righteous man* is a man of strict right, he will do no wrong, but he hath hardly that largeness of spirit to do good, he will do nothing but what the law will admit, that which another can neither hinder it nor call him in question for doing it: but the other, the *good man*, he will do that which is equal and fit; he will abate of strict right, he is willing to do courtesies, to perform all mutual good offices: for this *good man*, (he is so lovely a person, so highly valuable,) a man would even venture his own life to save this *good*

man's life, he is so beneficial to his neighbours.

But to speak to the point. *Just* is said to be two ways.

1. That is just, which *may be* done ; and if it be, no wrong is then done. And,

2. That is just, that *must be* done, and *ought to be* done. Or in short thus : there is, just *if it be* ; and just, *that it must be*.

I will make improvement of this distinction ; for this distinction will give a well-meaning-man relief about the justice of God, which we dread to think of, because we ourselves are obnoxious and liable : we are wont to say, it is just with God to punish sins ; I will grant 'tis true in the one sense, but I hope not in the second : it is just with God to punish sin ; wherever he thinks fit to punish a sinner, he doth that which is just. *Nehemiah ix. 33. Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us ; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.* But I will not say, just that *it must be done* ; then were we all undone, and our repentance and faith in vain ; and if God then use patience and forgiveness upon repentance or upon any other terms, then God in pardoning is not true to his justice. So it is just with God to punish sinners, where God thinks fit to inflict it ; and nobody can say any thing to the contrary : but thanks be to God, not just in the latter sense, that God *is bound* to it, that he *ought to do it*, that he *must* do it. Now, that it is not just with God to punish sin in this latter sense, is, because God is Lord and master of his own right, and he may depart from his right if he pleases. For thus I will state the case : we are  
all

all God's creatures, and God hath made us capable of himself, and of doing him service ; and therefore God by our make, hath a due of obedience from us, and a demand from us ; and if we fail, then God hath *jus pœnarum* for his just security, whereby he may exact from us his due of obedience. But now if God be master of his own right, then he may remit and forgive sin ; if he may not, he is not so much master of his right as if he might ; for every owner may depart from his right if he will, and abate and cut himself short of his right if he please. It is just, if a man requires what is owed him ; it is not unjust, if he do not : therefore we must not deny this to God ; for he is not master of his right so far as he might, if he have no power to use it ; but God being master of his own right, hath power to use it if he please ; and there is no such attribute in God, as necessitates him to punish sin whether he will or no, or to punish sin repented of ; and it will consist with goodness for God so to do ; and this it is, that when we consider a wicked world, we wonder at divine *patience* ; for if God were under a necessity of punishing the world condignly, the world would not stand one moment ; but this is what we resolve it into ; none of us knows the length of divine *patience*. I confess it is just, and it is good, that obstinacy and contumacy in sin, and impenitency be controuled and chastized ; for a malefactor not to receive justice, is a very great evil, because it doth countenance and encourage sin ; but if there be repentance, I am persuaded God is not bound to punish ; for repentance, where-ever it is, doth alter the case ; and God is not bound



bound to punish sin condignly, if the sinner repent and condemn himself, and deprecate God's just displeasure, and return to duty and obedience ; for then there is the effect of punishment before punishment ; for punishment is the medicine and cure of wickedness ; punishment is only where monition will not take effect to bring a creature to repentance and a better mind, to consider and know his duty, and to obey it. Therefore they are too severe, who insist upon the rule of justice, to exclude mercy, goodness, compassion, and power to forgive : they rob God of the honour of his grace, and make him less master of his own right ; they discourage conversion and endeavourings to return to God, to duty, and to obedience ; yea, they lay a foundation of desperation.

Therefore it is thus. That which we call the rule or law of justice, requires that to be done which justly *ought to be done* ; but it doth not require every thing to be done which justly *may be done* ; it justly *may be*, that a sinner, as a sinner, be punished ; but you cannot say that, of right, God *ought* to punish, though a sinner do repent. If of right it *ought to be*, that every sin ought to be punished ; then our Saviour engaged in a case that is not feasible ; he hath shewed his good-will indeed, but we can receive no relief from him ; and if God's righteousness did compel him not to forbear a sinner in order to reformation, then he were only as a judge determined by a law, which he cannot vary from, but he must execute it : but to every supremacy of power and authority (as undoubtedly it is in God) there is annexed a power of indulging, qualifying, moderating, and (if he sees cause)

cause) forgiving. Therefore though it *may be* done of right, to punish all delinquents, yet it is not of right that all *must be* punished ; because God is supreme and hath power to moderate, remit and abate. This I will grant that upon delinquency or an evil act done, there is a desert and worthiness of punishment, there is a potential guilt contracted, and the person is virtually under an obligation to punishment but not *actually* under an obligation to be punished ; for the actual obligation may be prevented and taken off by the clemency, benignity, and goodness of God ; he being master of his own right, and under no law at all, but the law of his own nature, and the law of his own will. So you see there is great use of this distinction ; just, that of right *may be done* ; and just, that of right *must be done*. And this I have here interposed, because this is very satisfactory to tender minds, that are afraid that their sins cannot be pardoned ; and because it is highly necessary for men that are serious and considerate, and do weigh how they shall be discharged of the guilt of sin, and secured from the justice of God because of their faultiness, to know and understand that the law of justice obliges a righteous person to do that which *ought to be done*, but not to do every thing that justly *may be done*.

But now to proceed : I shall show next, how *just* and *equal* are stated ; what makes *just*, and what makes *equal*.

*Just* is determined two ways ; either by the *proportion of things one to another* ; or by *positive constitution of persons*, who have right and power.

I. *Just*

1. *Just* or right, is determined by the *proportion of things* one to another ; and this you have resolved well by *Tully*. “ Right and just is not determined by “ particular fancy or arbitrary will, but by the nature “ and reason of things.” That is right, which the right of the matter doth resolve and determine itself to.

2. Other things are *just* or right, by *positive constitution* or *voluntary determination* ; and that is either by a proprietor, or a law-giver ; for where a man hath right of property, he may resolve in his own property as he himself sees cause ; and he that hath power to make laws, may constitute and make laws, and determine in the sphere of his activity as he thinks fit. I will give you two instances. 1. It seems to me reasonable, that *murder* should be punished with death ; and this not only because God hath said it, but because God hath declared it from principles of reason : for if you observe, when God forbids *murder*, he did not forbid it upon the account of his will, but upon a moral reason, because God made man in his own image : *therefore whosoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed ; for God requires blood for blood.* 2. But now for every *felon* to be punished with death, the right of this depends upon human constitution ; for this is the reason that we go upon ; rather a mischief in particular, than a general inconvenience ; rather a particular person who indeed is a malefactor, rather he be severely dealt with, than all sober persons should be abused and disturbed. So here is an instance of both : the one *just* by the *reason of proportion*, the other by *positive constitution* ; which takes in also a general reason to govern itself by.

Now

Now this same *positive constitution* is either general or particular ; if general, it is that which we call the law of the place ; if particular, then what every man will, in the ordering of his own right ; yet both of these, the proprietor and the law-giver, though they have privilege so far as privilege takes place, yet both of them are to be determined by the reason of things ; for this, both in heaven and on earth, is the supreme and sovereign law : the reason of things is an universal law, to which every body's liberty ought to vail and submit : now taking this for the rule, I confess other-where every body is free, and may make use of his own right and property as himself sees cause : for these are two maxims ; *every man may dispose of his own ; and every man may abate and remit of his right, if he himself will.* Now the former of the forementioned instances, namely *things that are determined by their relation each to other*, are those that we call the great rights of the world, that govern above and below, and are never to be controuled, never to yield or give place ; for they are a law with God, and according to the nature of God ; they are as unchangeable and as unalterable as God himself. The latter instance, are the lesser and particular rights which *depend upon human constitution* ; these are variable and changeable. The former are of easy determination and universal consent ; but about this latter is all the difference. And now because it is a matter of great importance, I will make these appear in particular examples.

And 1<sup>st</sup>. There are things that are in *themselves resolved and determined by their relation each to other.*

Thus,



Thus, if I by my make and constitution be an intelligent and voluntary agent ; then ought I to find out the reason of things, and in all my actions comply with it. That is ; I ought to find out the difference of good and evil upon a moral consideration, and comply with that difference ; I ought in the use of my liberty and freedom, to determine myself to good only, and avoid and eschew all evil. And this I call necessary matter, or indispensable ; there is such a relation between these terms, that these terms are inseparable ; for this is that which is proper to mind and understanding, to find out the nature of things ; and mind and understanding in man doth as much enable man to distinguish things in their goodness, as light does enable man to distinguish colours. Another instance : if I be apprehensive of God, I ought to reverence him, and to have him in regard ; for wherefore are the creatures below us excused from all acts of reverence and devotion toward God, but from their incapacity ? Another instance : if I am beholden to God, as I am, for his gracious communication and influence, my maintenance in being, and protection from evil ; then ought I to be thankful. And these are instances of the *highest order* ; and a man will be self-condemned if he do not approve himself in these things.——But in things also of a *lower order*. It is just and right for a child to honour a parent ; and this is grounded upon the proportion these terms bear one to another, *a child* and *a parent*. The like is between a master and a servant a servant is to do his master's work, this is just in itself. Further, where any is compounded of a  
gross

gross body and an immortal soul, the better and more noble part is to have the preeminence, and the other sub-ordination ; therefore *men* ought to make subservient to the state of their souls all bodily conveniences ; they ought not to neglect the use of their natural faculties, nor to use their natural faculties for the gratifying of their sensual appetite. These are things right and just in themselves. One instance more ; in use of all persons with whom we do converse, we are to deal with all men as we would be dealt with ourselves. These are the things that I instance in, that are *right in themselves*, where the nature of the things doth determine, and there needs no foreign power nor use of liberty ; for no power can give a dispensation, neither can any man in the use of his liberty depart from them ; none in the world can pretend to power or privilege beyond the confines of these. So that, not by opinion, but by the nature of the thing, right is constituted ; and it is not to be altered by any power whatsoever. But,

2. Right is determined *by positive constitution* ; and that is in two cases ; by the right of property, and by the right of authority.——By the right of property, every man may do with his own as he will ; he may keep it, or dispose of it as himself pleaseth. By the right of authority ; he that hath power makes laws as he finds cause, and so he doth determine right ; and a man is wanting to his duty, that doth not observe them : for it is to be supposed that the law of the place is not the institution of a particular will, but that it is in conjunction with right, and agreeable with universal reason. So, *according to law*,  
in

in this case, is *according to right*. I might add, that *custom and common usage* found right, or if not absolutely found right, at least it is to be imagined they concur with right, because they have so long obtained, and that they begun by contract and agreement, and had general consent, (though at this time it doth not appear,) and that depends upon the wisdom of a nation; and the wisdom of a nation is more likely to be right, than the sense of any particular person; and therefore that may be called just; which is done with reason according to usage and custom. Likewise *prescription* is a good argument of right; for right is thought to go along with practice; and title with possession; for if any body had had a demand to the contrary, why did not the world hear of it before? We may also hold *tacito consensu*; and there are these titles among us, that is, there is one in possession, but if another would, he might be outed; he comes into possession duly, and he may hold it without trouble of conscience, until he that hath right to dispose makes a demand; so that he is not thought to be a wrongful doer, who holds by *tacit consent*.

And so much for *just*: which though it belongs to the common dictates of reason, of which every one hath a copy writ with the finger of God in his soul; and though it may appear to be rather law than gospel, yet it is highly necessary.

And now for *equal*: and that is determined to be equal, that gives allowance where the case doth require, and where abatement is made upon reasonable consideration: but then there is that which is beyond all this; and that is, what we call mercifulness, graciousness;

ciouſneſs, compaſſion, benignity ; when a perſon out of his own good nature, or in a ſenſe of Gods goodneſs unto him, or in the conſideration of the fallibility and frailty of human nature, will do more than reaſonably can be demanded or expected : there are ſuch men in the world, tho' the world hath been bleſſed but with few of them ; I am ſure God deals thus with men, though men with men deal thus but ſeldom ; but that God doth thus, I make it thus appear. We ſay that God doth compaſſionate every compaſſionable caſe ; and we may alſo ſay, that the caſe of every penitent is a compaſſionable caſe ; for man was never better than finite and fallible, and if a finite and fallible creature fail and do amiſs, (as by the nature of his make he is ſubject to,) if he repent and revoke what he hath unduly done, that alters the caſe, and the caſe is compaſſionable. And God himſelf hath declared, that he doth not do alike in all caſes ; for although he hath threatned a ſinner or ſinful nation, yet if they repent, he doth not account himſelf engaged to puniſh ; and if a righteous perſon leave his righteouſneſs, God doth not think himſelf engaged to perform his promiſe. It is the notion of *Origen* ; “ If a man ſin, and ſuperadd im-  
“ penitence, and be obſtinate and contumacious in  
“ his ſin, the goodneſs of God requires him to con-  
“ troul this man ; for it is good that a contumacious  
“ ſinner be taken off by power, and puniſhed ; but  
“ God's goodneſs and righteouſneſs doth engage  
“ him to do good to a ſinner, if he doth repent and  
“ call for it. God by his goodneſs doth puniſh con-  
“ tumacy : God by his juſtice doth relieve peniten-  
“ cy.”



“cy.” And this is *Origen*. For justice and righteousness in God, doth not carry along with it the necessity of punishment, if there be repentance ; but justice and righteousness are often exegetical one of another ; and the righteousness of God is his benignity, clemency, compassion, and readiness to forgive ; or else it is his fidelity. Wherefore the righteousness of God, or his goodness, being considered, there is an effectual invitation of sinners to repent, and great encouragement to revoke what hath been unduly done. But I have no word of comfort to sinners who superadd contumacy and impenitency to sin ; for the goodness of God doth engage him to controul them ; for it is good, not only just, but good and fit in itself, that an obstinate and contumacious sinner be controuled ; but the case of every one that repents and leaves off to sin, and returns to duty, and deprecates God’s displeasure, is compassionate ; and it is amplitude, and liberty, and freedom both in God and man, to have it in his power to commiserate, and to be always free to compassionate every compassionate case : and whosoever it is that is bound up either by his own constitution and temper, or by his own resolution or decree, or by any imposition from abroad from shewing mercy freely ; he is in a state of narrowness, shortness, contractedness, imperfection ; and therefore it cannot be the case of God : for it is the greatest perfection to be able to do the most good, to afford the greatest relief, to allow the largest compassion ; and this as in regard of power, so also in respect of will ; it is goodness of will to have a mind to do it, and greatness of power to be able to do it.

Now

Now if you would bring this down into practice, then go this way to work. If a man will observe the rule of equity, he must take the case into consideration, and cloath it with all circumstances that belong to it, and give all allowance to the person concerned, for sudden surprisals, for invincible ignorance, for contracted necessity, for unavoidable accident, for something which might befall him that he could not foresee: and if you would extend your goodness to the utmost, give something to the frailty of human nature; where there is no other consideration, cast something in for the frailty of human nature.

Now that this notion I have been upon, is very frequent and ordinary in scripture, I will produce you some texts, where benignity, clemency and compassion, pass under the notion of justice and righteousness, *Matth. i. 19.* It is said of *Joseph*, he was a *just man*, therefore he would deal fairly with *Mary*, and would not expose her to shame. *Zach. ix. 9.* See what you have there in conjunction; *just, having salvation, and lowly, &c.* It is spoken prophetically of our Saviour, *Col. iv. 1.* *Masters, give to your servants that which is just and that which is equal*, that holds a proportion to their work and to their desert, *Job xxix. 14.* *I put on righteousness, and it cloathed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.* Now, what is *Job's* righteousness: see what he means, *verse 13.* *The blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.* *verse 15.* *I was eyes to the blind, feet was I to the lame;* This was his righteousness. *verse 17.* *I broke the jaws of the wicked, and pluckt the spoil out of their teeth:*

that is, he contested with those that were obstinate in wickedness and violence, and he did relieve those that stood in need; and this is the explication of *Job's* righteousness. *Psal. xxiv. 5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Psal. xxxiii. 5. He loveth righteousness and judgment;* and what is the explication? See the latter phrase, which in scripture commonly explicates the former: *for the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. Prov. x. 3. The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: the righteous, that is the bountiful and generous man. Prov. xi. 31. Behold, the righteous shall be recompenced in the earth, that is, the man of equity, moderation and fairness. Dan. iv. 27. Break off thy sins by righteousness: and the explication follows; and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor. Dan. ix. 16. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away, &c.* It was just, that they who had been so obnoxious, should be both carried into captivity and there continued: but by *righteousness*, he means his *mercy* and his *forgiveness*, and his *turning away his anger*. I might add many more places of scripture, to shew that when justice and righteousness are attributed to God, they ordinarily hold forth this notion of *mercifulness, graciousness, compassion and good-will*.

But now I will shew it you out of authors among the heathens. *Aristotle* saith, that *equity is the truest justice*; and there is no justice if not equal consideration, fair-dealing, candid construction; this is the truest justice, and this he speaks, being the result of natural light. And it is the saying of *Seneca*; "It

" is

“ is not worthy of condemnation for a man to con-  
“ fine himself in his kindness to the letter of the  
“ law :” to be only as the law will make one, is ve-  
ry sorry upon the account of equity.

But I will conclude this discourse with a caution ;  
because I would not abuse the good nature of the  
world, nor give advantage either to folly, or baseness.  
By way of caution then, two things do greatly abate  
the consideration of equity and giving allowance, (to  
wit) 1. *Wilfulness and folly.* And 2. *Falshood and*  
*dishonesty.* 1. *Wilfulness and folly.* And most com-  
monly the weakest are the most wilful ; and they  
that have the least of reason, have the most of self-  
will. Now where a man plays the fool, it is not  
reasonable he should gain a privilege by his folly ; e-  
specially where it doth redound to another’s wrong :  
for we must take a course to secure one, as well as  
another : I commend him as a person of moderation  
that will allow for other mens mistakes ; but I can-  
not say an obligation, that if one man be wilful and  
a fool, another man should suffer wrong and fall short  
of his right. But then 2<sup>dly</sup>, Much more in the other  
case, where a man plays the knave ; convince a man  
of that, and he hath no plea in equity ; for he that  
plays the knave, is dishonest and a great sinner ; and  
therefore is under an obligation to repentance, and if  
he do repent he will make satisfaction and reparation  
where he hath done wrong ; and till a man doth re-  
pent, his case is not compassionate ; therefore where  
men play the knave, they can have no pretence to  
this fair and equal consideration. Therefore I except  
these two sorts of men : where men are *wilful and*



*play the fool*, or where men are *dishonest in their way*; these men have no colour of pretence, or demand to equal consideration: but where men fall into unavoidable accidents, and are mistaken, there good men will consider them; but they are not to be either *wilful* or *false*.

## DISCOURSE LXXII.

*Whatsoever things are just.*

PHIL. iv. 8.

*Whatsoever things are just.*

**I** Have made a declaration *in general* concerning *justice* and *equity*; and shewed you wherein they agree, and wherein they differ; and wherein the one exceeded the other: and now I am come to make some *particular* application. By the former discourse you may understand the principles and ingredients that go to the complexion and constitution of a truly honest man: you have justice and equity, and candor, and ingenuity, and moderation, and reason, fair usage, gentle carriage, benign behaviour, fair treating of men, good construction and candid interpretation of all things and sayings; and all these are beyond strict right, and equity comprehends all these; and tho' our *English* language divides *just* and *equal*, and makes them two things, yet the *Greek* word com-

comprehends them both. Now if these things be necessary to render and constitute an honest man, how much more are they requisite as the becoming ornaments of a christian? for it is expected that if men be christians, they be more than ordinary: a christian comprehends in it all the principles of morality, and a further advantage from the nobleness and ingenuity of a gospel-spirit. For if a man come to be a sensible partaker of the grace and goodness of God: as God doth express himself in the covenant of grace, declaring himself for the pardon of sin, and acceptance of sinners to terms of grace and love in and through Christ, upon the sinner's repentance, submission and acknowledgment; if he fail and fall short in this instance of moral perfection, how will he then approve himself to be qualified according to the perfection of a gospel-spirit? One that is so beholden to the grace and goodness of God, if he falls short in this point of morality, he discredits himself and disparageth his profession; he quits himself very poorly, and doth not seem in any measure to be duly sensible of the high communication of God in a gospel-way, nor in any way of worthiness expresses the participation of the divine nature to which he is called by God in Christ. For consider *how unnatural* it is, and disproportionate for one who professeth this faith, *that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; and that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and that in this was the love of God manifested toward us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that*

*we might live through him* : and *that* these things are declared from heaven with the greatest assurance ; whereas you have it declared in the same book concerning the angels that fell, *that* they are not made partakers of this great privilege ; *that* God did not take hold of them in their fall ; *for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham* ; and God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment : a man, I say considering these things, the encouragement we have and how much we partake of divine grace and goodness ; and how effectually God hath recommended his goodness, kindness and compassion to us men, more than to the angels ; *how unnatural* it is for such a one to harden his heart against his brother, and not to take his case in commiseration, nor to give any allowance for the infirmities that are well-nigh inseparable from human nature !

But all this while I am *in generals* ; I shall never make you understand this notion, unless I descend to *particular instances*. If a man therefore will approve himself in this particular that is here charged upon him as a christian, I suggest to him the following things.

*1st. Let him be very shy and wary, where he hath a particular interest.* For we may take it for granted, that we love ourselves and our own right well enough ; and will at every turn take care of ourselves. There is no danger here : but the danger is on the other side, whether we will indifferently hear what may be alledged to the contrary, or weigh the argument or

rea-

reason that makes against ourselves. Wherefore let a man put himself into the other man's stead for a while, and seriously consider what he would do if the other man's case were his : for *Solomon* hath observed, *Prov. xviii. 17. that every man is right in his own cause, though he that comes after him easily finds him out.* There is no doubt but a man will be true to himself, and make the best of his own cause ; but if a man will be right and equal, let him see with his neighbour's eyes in his own case, and with his own eyes in his neighbour's case ; make his cause thine, and thy cause his, and see what thou wilt do then. However let an argument be heard on the one side, as well as the other ; and let not thy judgment be otherwise, where the cause is materially the same, where only there is difference of persons ; in this respect let no man be a respecter of persons ; let not a man's own cause balance him at all, to keep him from doing justice ; a man that would be equal and deal fairly, must have a suspicious eye upon himself.

2dly, *Allow not thyself at any time, to be arbitrary in any cause depending between thee and another :* do nothing where thou art concerned, upon the single account of pleasure ; but do what *Job* advises, hear the voice of every creature. Where a man is an absolute owner, and no body hath right, he may there please his own mind, observing the general direction, doing nothing against the glory of God and the good of his neighbours ; but if there be a matter of right between one and another, it is nothing what a man hath a mind to do ; he is not to be arbitrary ; for will signifies nothing at all, where another person is  
con-



concerned ; but reason and right are all ; will is nothing, and of no account. Where this temper is, that a person must have his will ; he is not a person fit to be dealt withal ; none knows what to do with such a one ; such a person for his will (though it be the most unrighteous in the world) yet, for his *will* is for turning all into confusion. Some men think it is the highest perfection to be *arbitrary* ; but really if they do consider, it is a piece of the greatest impotency and foulest deformity, for a man to stand upon having his will for a rule, and that a man must have his mind ; and that a man will not be content ; though reason be not on his side, he must have his mind. Let us remember that God himself, in whom is all power, and who hath in him the fulness of liberty, hath not done because he would ; for it is said, that all 'the ways of God, are ways of righteousness, goodness and truth : and why shall we sorry creatures pretend that this is perfection and nobleness in us, to have power to do what we will, and think it a confinement of our liberty to be confined to the reason of things ; since God who hath all liberty, doth confine all his ways to the reason of things ? It is not the highest excellency in God, to do because he wills and what he wills ; but there is that in God himself, which is transcendently above will and pleasure ; that is, his holiness, goodness, and righteousness ; and will vails to these. And if we look into our Saviour's life, doth not he write after this example ? For although *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he put himself into the form of a servant* ; and what is a servant ? He that is a servant, doth bind himself  
to

to do his master's work, and not to do his own will. A servant is the master's instrument. It is true, he that commands him, must command him with reason; and he is to obey where there is no reason to the contrary. Persons that do not consider and take themselves to task, neither have established a throne of judgment in their own souls; they are very liable to this of setting up will for a law, and pleasure for a rule. It is one of the greatest things in life, for a man to know his own proportion, and be in his own place; not to take too much upon him, to be no more in a cause than a man should be, to keep within compass, and free from selfishness: and in case of injury, whether real or imaginary, to be content with moderate satisfaction; to be willing our neighbour should have a share, have his due, fare as we fare; and that whatsoever we would that men should do unto us, we do the same to them.

3dly. *Let no man adventure to be a judge where he is a party concerned.* Though thou thinkst thou knowst the case very well, yet let another man speak. No man can safely trust himself so far, no law or reason will allow of it: therefore government is for this purpose, to determine in case of wrong, and judge between party and party. Whosoever takes upon him to state, resolve, judge and determine, where he is concerned; he is an unrighteous person: for though his principle may happen to be to do right, yet how many will not sit down without their own satisfaction: this is deep selfishness, and a principle of great dissingenuity: and these men are in the highest way of arrogancy and affectation imaginable. Some men think

think there is no wrong but gross oppression, plain and open injury : but these things are also contrary to the rule of right ; selfishness, arbitrariness, to be a carver for himself, to controul the sense of others, to be party and judge in the same case, to be angry with all by-standers if they will not submit to his irregular sense : these are unrighteous men.

4thly. *Shew thy reasonableness, fairness and equity, in thy readiness to refer to arbitration, matters of injury and difference, and matters of trespass and wrong ; and easily close with terms of accommodation.* It is looked upon with suspicion, when one party will refer, and the other will not ; for surely there is one righteous man in the place where thou dwellest besides thyself ; I should think I should find one of my neighbours, with whom a righteous and just cause may be trusted.

5thly. In the next place, I advise to prevent all difference, that *nothing do rest in secret and undeclared trust* ; but let things fitting be timely done between persons that enter into an agreement : it is a safe rule in transaction, for persons thus to resolve, that nothing is done till all is done ; uncertain and incomplete is next to nothing. Where the thing is not perfectly done, it will only occasion controversy, debate and dispute. Where men are accountable one to another, let them at all due distances of time state their accounts, and make a full conclusion ; and where there are agreements made, let them be well witnessed, because of the uncertainty and frailty of mens lives ; and because they that are concerned, may be tempted by self-interest to withdraw from what was concluded

concluded on : for there is a disposition in every one to incline in judgment toward his own concernment. Now upon failing herein, not doing that which is fitting timely, come great fallings out, many tedious law-suits ; and the judge is at a loss to determine whether right be on the one side or the other ; because the persons have been slack and remiss in doing what was fit, that their private agreements might be made appear and confirmed ; and upon this occasion the losing party flies in the face of his judge ; whereas he hath been wanting to his own cause, in not making his own right sure to himself : for if that which he supposeth to be his right, be so, yet he cannot make it appear to be so : if it be his right, why doth he not make it appear ? It is a maxim in law, the law hates a doubtful and an imperfect, and an incomplete thing. There is no such thing either in law or nature : for nature doth bring things to perfection : therefore this is a mighty failing in contracts to leave things imperfect ; and it is highly prejudicial to righteousness and justice and fairness and equity, and to the maintaining of mutual love and good will among men. Have things therefore stated, determined, exprest ; that though memory should fail, or there should be death in the case, or selfishness should prevail ; yet things should appear.

6thly, In the next place, *make reparation freely in case of any wrong* : wrong is two ways, either by defamation, or unjustly detaining : in case of defamation, then there ought to be acknowledgment, and a justifying the person whom thou hast unjustly accused or causelessly defamed ; and asking him forgiveness.



ness. In case of right detained, then there ought to be restitution and reparation : for it is resolved by all divines, casuists, and school-men whatsoever, that there is no confidence in application to God to pardon a man's sin, where he hath trespassed upon another, if there is not in him an inclination to make restitution and reparation where he hath done amiss. Wherefore in case of defamation, let there be a justifying of the person defamed, and an asking him forgiveness ; and in case of right detained, make reparation and restitution ; and that voluntarily : for either thou must do no wrong, or else thou must make reparation, and ask God forgiveness, and him whom thou hast wronged. For iniquity must not finally prosper, because God judgeth the world.

7thly, In the next place, let a man value his credit by his faith in keeping his word. It is a great failing among men, that men think that their word is a small obligation upon them. Men are wonderfully to blame in this point ; it is a choice piece of religion ; a man would not easily promise ; but if his word is past, he ought to perform it : he that makes no conscience to keep his word, opens his conscience to all unrighteousness ; for every man at first is modest, but afterward (it may be) no obligation will hold him ; he that begins with the breach of his word, may end in falling short of his oath. Who is sure of any man but by his word ? This is greatly neglected, and men do not think it a matter of conscience ; but really it is a great piece of unrighteousness ; and men are mightily wanting to the stock of their credit, when they do not keep their word.

Therefore

*Whatsoever things are just.*

Therefore men ought to charge themselves to keep their word exactly.

8thly, In the next place I advise that *men would be plain-dealers, open-hearted* : that which we call wit and cunning, is far from this christian accomplishment that I am now upon ; do not over-reach by wit or cunning ; but use plain dealing. No man is afraid to deal with him that is accounted a plain dealer, an open hearted man : but if a man be a hard dealer, a cunning man, apt to lie upon the catch ; every man deals with him with fear. If there were plainness, we should be wise enough one for another, but if a man will be politick, divided from honesty ; he may deceive the wisest ; policy divided from honesty, is iniquity.

9thly, In the next place, *make the same allowance to the infirmities, failings, shortness, and mistakes of others; that thou doest to thy own.* Many apologies will a man make for himself, if he mistake ; give that to another in the like case.

10thly, And lastly, *in acknowledgment of what Christ hath done for thee, be gracious and merciful, &c. beyond what absolute reason or strict right will require* : this is charged upon us, as christians : as thou art a christian, yield more toward equal consideration, fair dealing, moderate reparation, amicable composition and reconciliation, than absolute reason will require or enjoin. Look to God, and do something signal and remarkable in acknowledgment of the grace of the gospel. Col. iii. 12. *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forgiving one another,*

*Whatsoever things are just.*

*another, even as Christ forgave you, &c.* Charge yourselves with those graces of the Spirit, *Gal. v. 22. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, &c.* And discharge yourselves of those works of the flesh, *verse 19, which are, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, &c.* To do justly and love mercy, these are universally good, and necessary at all times ; but in a due sense of the great benefits that we have revealed to us in the gospel, and upon the great communications that we have of God by Jesus Christ through the gospel, and the great supply that is there made for all our weaknesses, failings and miscarriages ; we ought to act above the law of strict right and common reason.

Thus have I brought down generals to particular instances ; and I think most of the cases (if not all) that do occur in human life, will receive some satisfaction by these rules.

And now in the next place, to reinforce this, I will give you twelve arguments of recommendation of justice, righteousness, fair-dealing, good usage, equal consideration ; then some other arguments that will represent unrighteousness as mischievous, hurtful and destructive.

1. Justice, righteousness, fair-dealing, and equal consideration, are things wherein we *imitate and resemble God* ; and I do not know any thing in the world wherein we resemble God more than in the ways of righteousness and fair consideration, mercifulness and compassion : and God is known to his creatures by these : and concerning God, notwithstanding

standing his fulness of wisdom, and his being cloathed with omnipotence, and not to be demanded of his ways by his creatures, yet God doth never in the use of any power or privilege vary from the rule of right; *Job viii. 3. Doth God pervert judgment, or doth the almighty pervert justice?* It is *Abraham's* argument, *Gen. xviii. 25. That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked: that be far from thee; shall not the judge of all the world do right?* *Abraham* is confident of this, that the judge of all the earth will do right. *Psalms ciii. 13. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;* so far is God from hard usage and hard measure. Verse 14, *for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust;* God will remember for our advantage the frailty of our creation; there is nothing wherein God doth declare himself more offended or aggrieved, than that it should be thought he doth not afford any of his creatures fair allowance, pity and compassion; *Ezekiel xviii.* the whole chapter; so that if we will write after God's copy, we must confine our powers and privileges to the rule of righteousness and equity. That is the first; these are *in imitation of God.*

2. These uphold the whole world; the world would run into a chaos of confusion, if these things should fail: this is that we must all wish for, that truth and righteousness may overcome and prevail; either let truth take place, and righteousness be a law among men, or we overthrow all foundation, for no man will know where he is: this is the law of the rational



onal and intellectual world, that things be transacted according to the principle of reason and righteousness. It is as much a law in the intellectual world, as it is a law in the inferior world, that things act according to their nature and quality; that light things fly up, and heavy things fall down; that the sun should give light, that the fire should burn, &c. and if things in nature should not keep their place, all things would be at a loss; it is the same thing in the rational world; every irregular inordinate act in the common-wealth of mankind, is the same as violence, and moving out of the sphere in the natural world. The limits and bounds of reason and of right, do confine the acts of intelligent creatures; and though we through incogitancy do not consider our actions, yet every exorbitance is monstrous.

3. These are every body's *foundation, tenure, security and safety*. Where these fail, there is nothing but fraud, cozenage and deceit; title and property signify nothing, if these be not. For every body's foundation is settled upon justice, truth, righteousness, fair dealing, &c. every man is a wolf, a devil to other men, where these are banished: what surety hath any man, but *right* to a thing? If right cannot prevail, nothing but strength will then secure him to keep his own.

4. These are *according to our principles*; for we are made to these; these are our genuine complexion and natural constitution; and we force ourselves when we go out of the way of truth and righteousness, justice, and equity; and a man pursues the principle whereof he consists, and doth according to the

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the intention of the creator that made him, when he doth act in ways of reason and truth and righteousness and justice and fair-dealing; and in all other ways he acts exorbitantly and irregularly, and is a confounder of the world; for these things comply with the principles of God's creation, and are the creator's impress upon our minds; in respect of these we bear the image of God.

5. These are the *right of every case*; and the right of the case is the law of the world, which it is a man's wisdom to discern, and his goodness to follow: it is the true employment of reason and understanding to find out what is just and right, and it is the goodness of a man's mind and his honesty to comply with it; and these are the great perfections of human nature, in the first place to discern right, and in the next place to comply with it.

6. These are the *rule and law of all action*; which if not observed, then movers do interfere and clash one with another and contradict and hinder one another in their way: hence it is that there is wrath and passion and provocation and exasperation, &c. because our motion is irregular and exorbitant, and because men govern not their actions by rule and law. It is observed in the motion of the heavenly bodies, that it is the quickest motion, and yet it is motion without conflagration; the reason is, because all move regularly; therefore no setting on fire among them; but here below among men, our motion is accompanied with fallings out, exasperation, provocation, fightings, woundings, interferings, entering upon one another's right, because men are

irregular and out of the way, and depart from the rule and law of action.

7. These are the things that *every body looks for and expects in his own case*. No man consents to his own injury and wrong ; ask any man, would he have right ? Yes, and he takes it very heinously if wrong be done him, and if he be oppressed : how comes it to pass that we would have right done to us, and make no conscience of doing right to another ? Can'st thou allow that in thyself, that thou can'st allow in none but thyself ? If it be a good argument, this must be done to thee because it is right ; it is the same argument for another. Therefore right ought indifferently to be done ; for every body expects it, therefore every body ought to do it.

8. These *will be justified when they come to examination*. For these things speak for themselves and will endure the light, whereby to be searched and looked into. That a thing is true and right, is an account to God and man ; no man need be ashamed of it, it is safe and secure.

9. These are the only things that will *hold out at the long run*. Just and right may be oppressed for a while, but they cannot be finally suppressed ; for though men shall go about to controul it, yet finally God will make right to take place, and wrong will be confusion to him that doth it. Right will finally prevail ; as sure as God doth take upon him the government of his creature, so surely he will bring right to pass at last : let us therefore carry on the cause of right.

10. These

10. *These excuse magistrates from all imputation of rigor and severity in punishment* ; for punishments are for vindication of right, justification of the law, and reformation of the person ; it is not the fruit of an arbitrary will, or that a person pleaseth himself in the exercise of power ; but punishments in the hands of wisdom are mainly for example, and for reformation, to reduce delinquents to repentance and reformation, and effectually to warn others that they do not transgress.

11. *These remove all suspicion of arbitrariness.* For it is not the arbitrary will of him that is in trust, but common reason and the right of the case, that equity and righteousness and justice and fair dealing take place.

12. And lastly, *These are grounds of peace and satisfaction to all doers* ; for if a man do his duty, and what he doth be just and equal, he need not trouble himself with what will come of it ; he may be satisfied he hath done his duty, and that which the right of the case doth require.

These are the recommendations of justice and righteousness and equity and fair dealing unto you.



## DISCOURSE LXXIII.

*Whatsoever things are just.*

PHIL. iv. 8.

*Whatsoever things are just.*

**I** Have made a general declaration of just, righteous, equal, fair : I have shewed you it also in several particulars : and to reinforce it, I have produced arguments to recommend righteousness and justice. I shall now give you some contrary arguments against unrighteousness and unjust dealing.

Some may wonder that I make such a stir, and insist so long upon a point which is called only a moral argument. That denomination doth not, I think, under-value any thing in religion. For on this very account, it is of the more importance ; it is an unalterable, unchangeable, undispensable truth ; it complies with the law of heaven, and with the nature of God ; and doth sanctify the subject by its presence : but if you would have it effectually recommended, I refer you to the prophet *Micah* ; who when he doth take upon him to speak of religion in contradistinction to positive institutions, and expressly to declare what is good in itself, and upon its own account acceptable to God, and paramount to all sacrifices and institutions, although never so various, never so costly, *thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil,*  
 &c.

&c. he over-looks all these, and in competition makes them nothing. But this is that which is good and acceptable to God, to *do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* Where he sums up religion in three particulars, and gives the two first places to this virtue that we are now upon, that is, justice and equity and fairness, &c. For you may remember I have taken mercy into the comprehension of equity.

But I am now to finish the argument. I therefore will betake my self to those reasons that I am to give you against unrighteousness and unjust dealing ; and I will give you three or four of these.

1. Unrighteousness is *the iniquity that usually meeteth with present punishment, and a more sudden controul from God, than any other sin ;* and it is that sin the apostle speaks of, *1 Tim. v. 24. Some sins are open before, going before-hand to judgment.* For this sin is a trespass against *the work of the day ;* for God's present business is to uphold righteousness ; and this is the issue of his government in the world, that truth and righteousness may have a thorough empire on the earth. Therefore persons that are injurious and oppressive, they oppose and contradict that which is God's present work. Wherefore they provoke God to remove them, or disable them ; because they controul him in the work of his present business, the ordering of his family ; for this world is his family. This I will shew you some scriptures for, *Deut. xxv. 13. Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small, &c.* where just weights and true measures are enjoined and enforced by this argument,

verse 15. *that thy days may be lengthned in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* Intimating that God is concerned to cut men off, that are false and perfidious and stand in the way of righteousness. *Micah vi. 10. Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure which is abominable? Shall I account them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights, &c? For this cause will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate, because of thy sin.* And the wise man *Solomon* hath three or four proverbs to it, that *false weights are abominable to God.* But to make you apprehensive hereof, I will produce you sundry places of scripture, by which I will make it appear that nations have been wiped out suddenly, because they have been unrighteous, oppressive, unmerciful, cruel. *Joel iii. 19. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness. Why? for their violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land.* *Psal. cxxxvii. 7. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; why? who said, rase it, rase it even to the foundation thereof; ver. 8, 9. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed: happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us: happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones: and this is upon the account of their injurious dealing with the children of Israel.* *1 Sam. xv. 2. Thus said the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Wherefore, now go smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, &c.*

ver.

ver. 3. And you know what it cost *Saul*, to whom this commission was given ; for not executing it to the full, for sparing some, and the best too, under pretence of sacrifice ; God rejects him from being king. Thus far in general. Now I will give you three or four instances of particular persons. *Judg.* i. 7. *And Adonibezek said, threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table ; as I have done, so God hath requited me, &c.* He was made to acknowledge, that seventy kings he had served on that fashion, and now he was brought to the same condition himself. *Judg.* viii. 19. *Zeba and Zalmunna having the brethren of Gideon in their power, cut them off ; and when Gideon had taken them, he tells them ; as the Lord liveth, if he had saved them alive, I would not slay you ; but now he would deal with them as they had dealt with his brethren.* *1 Sam. xv. 33.* *Samuel said to Agag, as thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.* I might instance also in *Haman's* gallows prepared for *Mordecai*, and he himself executed upon it : I dare say, if you read over sacred story, or any one history that is now extant in the world, you shall find there is no sin, no sort of sin, so accounted for and punished in this world, as this sin of injustice and unrighteousness. Not that it doth more reflect upon God ; for idolatry and atheism may as well rise up in defiance against God ; but because injustice and unrighteousness doth rise up against God *in his work*, and hinder the work of the day ; to wit, the promoting of truth and



and reason and justice in God's family. — And to make you the more apprehensive of this, I will add more instances; for if men would be more prevailed with to overlook particular self-interest, and to use fair dealing and righteousness and justice towards others, it would mightily prepare men to perform their duty to God, if they would do their duty to man; and it is St. *John's* argument: but I proceed. Two chapters in the prophet *Amos* are spent almost to this purpose. *Amos* i. 3. *Thus saith the Lord; for three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; and what is the account thereof? Oppression, violence and hard measure; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron, &c.* verse 6. *Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof: and what is the reason? Because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom, &c.* And there is no sin instanced in, but this of unrighteousness and unmercifulness. ver. 9. *Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof: and these three and four all resolve themselves into this one sin of tyranny, oppression, injustice, &c.* well, what is the reason? *Because they delivered up the whole captivity of Edom, and remembred not the brotherly covenant, &c.* ver. 11. *Thus saith the Lord; for three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof: why? Because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever, &c.* ver. 13.

*Thus*

*Thus saith the Lord ; for three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof ; what is the reason ? Because they have ript up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border, &c. And it is very observable ; before we had punishment executed for hard measure upon Edom ; and here, you have Edom itself charged and threatned for the like sin : impartial is God in his justice : then descend to the second chapter, ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord ; for three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof : and what is the account ? Because he burnt the bones of the king of Edom into lime, &c. ver. 6. Thus saith the Lord ; for three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof ; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes, &c. And this is the iniquity the prophet instances in ; when he talks of seven transgressions, they all resolve into this, unmercifulness, cruelty, injustice, unrighteousness, tyranny, &c. But to shew you that God is universally resolved in this case. Psal. ciii. 6. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment, for all that are oppressed. This God owns as the work of the day, and thinks himself mainly concerned in this, to execute righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Col. iii. 25. Every one that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done ; for God is no respecter of persons : God is of no body's party, nor can be induced to consent to iniquity, or to like any thing out of respect to any one's person, but what is suitable to his own most holy nature, and according to his*  
righteous

righteous will. This is what I say therefore ; that unrighteousness, injustice, unmercifulness, &c. usually meets with present punishment. *Lam. iii. 64, 65. Render unto them a recompence, O Lord, according to the work of their hands ; give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them.* This is upon the account of this sin, injustice, &c. And it is warranted, for any under oppression to apply to God for relief. Therefore this is highly considerable, and this is not a notion of a man's head, but it ought to govern in a man's whole practice ; reason, equity, righteousness, fair dealing, and doing to one another as we would be done unto.

*In respect of a man's self, a man should be righteous ;* for this sin of unrighteousness, unmercifulness and injustice, destroys the peace and quiet of our own minds. He that is privy to an unrighteous act done by himself, is full of jealousies and suspicions, and constantly fears him that he hath wronged : therefore that thy mind may be at peace, that thou may'st be secure and quiet, do no unrighteous thing : for no man can satisfy himself and have peace, where he is privy to his own falseness and unrighteousness, unless by long continuation he hath acquired obdurateness and searedness of conscience.

3. *It brings a man into real danger.* Men do commonly bring upon themselves the unkind usages that they meet with from others ; for acts of injury on one side, provoke to acts of injury on the other side ; and every man hath cause to fear, that the other to whom he hath done injury, will revenge it. Now that a man may have good quarter and fair dealing, let him be exactly righteous.

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4. *In wrong doing, it is a hard thing to put a stop or assign a measure.* Therefore a thief on the high-way is so great a malefactor, because he hath the traveller in his power, and he abuseth him at his pleasure ; and he that will begin at such a violent act as to rob, who knows where he will stay ? And therefore when a man goes out of the way of righteousness, equity and justice ; it is a very hard matter to assign a measure ; and that upon a double account. *First*, Because innocency is every body's safety. For it is a far easier matter for a man to retain his innocency at first, than to moderate himself and keep himself within measure when he hath once consented to do an act that is wrong. Obligation to conscience is lost, and no man knows where he will stop. *Secondly*, A man is tempted when he hath done an injury, to disable him whom he hath wronged, that he himself may be out of danger. Therefore the *Italian* saith, if you once hurt, destroy, and let him not live to revenge. So where a man hath begun, he is tempted to go further ; for men are very apt to provide for their own security, and they think it to be for their safety, to destroy where they have wronged : therefore if a man have received an affront, or scorn or indignity be put upon him ; for his own sake I advise him that he doth not resent it, that he take no notice of it : it may be that may work upon the ingenuity of the person, (if he have any ingenuity left in him,) that in the sense of his own baseness he may condemn himself, and of an enemy become a friend.

5. *Nothing is deeper imprinted in human nature, than righteousness, fairness, benevolence, and this ingenuity of carriage.*



*carriage.* And that *universal benevolence*, which God by his own right hand did sow in the *nature* of man; and did plant, when he made man upon earth; that *universal benevolence* which spirits the intellectual world, doth require of each man towards another, *faith* and *truth*. Now, in resemblance thereof, and in participation of this *universal benevolence*, which is in the *superior world* (the intellectual world of soul and spirit) you have the resemblance of this, in the *inferior world* (*viz.*) the suitableness and fitness that is in one thing to accommodate another; as you see the whole creation of God is mutually beneficial. There is nothing that is in being, tho' devoid of the perfection of reason and understanding, but hath, as it's dowry, a *disposition and fitness to accommodate the universe to some necessary use and purpose.* And this likewise is agreeable to the light of nature. There has not been any noble or generous amongst the heathen, but they have deeply charged themselves in this particular. To instance, *Regulus*, a famous Roman, being in the wars taken prisoner; he had his liberty given him upon his *parole*, to seek an exchange. He goes home; he cannot effect it; and tho' it cost him his life, he would return. Natural light hath attained this perfection eminently, and the heathens have been excellent in it. The justice of *Aristides* is so eminent, that his name is convertible with *justice*. He would not consent to an act of treachery, he would not violate faith, he would not take advantage falsely, to save his life, to save his nation. This a good author says of him, "when he undertak-

"sat in council, and was in the exercise of authority may be f-

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God " and government, he would do nothing in confi-  
man; " deration of, or with respect to *his private ad-*  
; that " *vantage.*" And I am much taken with that mot-  
ectual to over one of the *Roman* emperor's gates, " if a-  
other, " ny man would violate right, and venture to do an  
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ich is " it, less than to gain the *empire* of the world." Al-  
f soul so the *Barbarians* (as they were called) in *Scythia*,  
n the this was a *religion* amongst them. They were called  
s that *Barbarians* because they had no culture; but they  
ou see were famous for *moderation*, and the *love of justice*.  
eficial. To conclude therefore; since *equity* and *fairness*  
of the have such a foundation in *human nature*; since so  
th, as much in *reason*; since so much may be alledged a-  
ate the gainst the contrary; but especially since we ourselves  
d this meet with such usage from God; and particularly  
There since the terms of the gospel are such as they are; as  
ft the thou art a christian, in acknowledgment of what  
lves in Christ hath done and suffered, take up this resoluti-  
ous Ro-on, that it shall be the better for every one with whom  
ad his thou hast to do in the world, because Christ died and  
an ex-became a sacrifice both for thee and him. Where-  
t; and fore being made partakers of so much of the kindness  
Natural of heaven, shew thy self merciful and kind in some  
and the proportionable manner. For we ourselves are the  
lice of objects of God's commiseration, or we had rued it to  
vertible eternity; and our souls are the purchase of Christ's  
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the grace of God as we are partakers thereof, take four places of scripture into your consideration. Phil. ii. 1. *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies: what then? Fulfil ye my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* Col. iii. 12. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* 2 Cor. xii. 20. *For I fear lest when I come I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as I would not, lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; see how the apostle multiplies equipollent words, that he might meet with every case.* Gal. v. 20. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strifes, seditions, heresies, &c.* For heresies here, are not things of judgment and opinion, but factions. Now as you are partakers of the grace of the gospel, and as you are repaired by the blood of Christ, approve yourselves worthily to these four places of scripture. But if through bad nature or contrary custom, you find it difficult to overcome self, then I will rouse you up by two considerations; and I am sure these two will take with any man that hath any sense of reason or religion, or honesty left in him. And these are,

1. The fifth petition of the Lord's prayer, *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*; let a man seriously think with himself and consider; if he do not this heartily and cordially, he prays against himself, when he repeats that petition; for he that doth not forgive, carries within himself an unanswerable argument that his sins are not forgiven; nay, he puts a bar and an impediment to the forgiveness of his sins.

2. The other is, *Mat. xviii. 34, 35. — And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* Though it be but a parable, yet take the notion that the parable doth exhibit. There was a rich creditor who in his goodness complies with the necessity of his debtor's case, and abates of his due, and takes such composition as he might have: this debtor, that was so fairly dealt withal, hath a petty debt of his own, one that owes him a small sum; and now he falls upon him and uses him extremely hard. Hereupon the Lord of that servant was wroth with him, and the parable represents, that the debt that was remitted and abated, returned upon him again. Our behaviour means thus; we ourselves are greatly indebted to God, we pray for pardon and forgiveness and for grace, and we do obtain it; and God doth expect we should express the sense thereof by dealing with others tenderly and compassionately; and in case we do not thus imitate God, in forgiving as we are forgiven, we provoke God to reyoke what before

was



was in a way fairly to be remitted us ; and we take a course to reinforce and bring upon ourselves a cancell'd obligation. Give therefore (let me intreat you) fair allowance for these things ; 1. For the person's *ignorance and incogitance*, where he hath done amiss. 2. Give a just allowance for his *necessity and poverty*. 3. Give a just allowance for his *misapprehension and mistake*. 4. And lastly, give a just allowance for the *frailty of human nature*, be wanting to nothing that the reason of the thing or the equity of the case may require.

I have but two things to add to this argument, and then shall pass on to the next head. The first shall concern the kinds of justice and righteousness ; for there is a famous distinction in the world, that must not be neglected ; righteousness and justice, which is *in bargain* and commutation ; and righteousness and justice, which is *in distribution*. The other shall only resolve this question, what righteousness is, and what it imports when it is ascribed unto God.

First, The kinds of justice, to wit, *commutative* and *distributive justice* ; the former is concerned in bargain and treaty, buying and selling. The latter is concerned in rewards and punishments. The main thing is now to state which is the rule and measure of justice in these two. For the former, the rule or measure of *commutative justice*, which runs through all the affairs of ordinary life ; the rule there, is the proportion of things ; and here he that will be righteous, must afford a penny-worth for a penny. The seller is not to take any advantage of the ignorance of the buyer ; but if he finds him unskilful, he ought by his skill to supply him ; the skill of the one ought

to be the safety and security of the other. Every trade is a trust ; so that a man coming to an artist presumes he may depend upon his skill ; and if he deceive him, he is unjust. Every profession, I say, hath a trust in it, and doth declare that the person is a person of skill ; and if men be honest, a man may presume he may trust to the skill of the artist, and have confidence in his fidelity ; so that any one that is a cheat in his own way of trading, or false in his profession, is guilty of a double iniquity ; and the charge is the deeper, and the person more guilty, according to the consequences of the failure, and where the damage that follows upon the miscarriage is greater and more mischievous. Wherefore let two sorts of professions take heed to it ; those that are concerned in the lives and in the health of men ; and those that are concerned in the state of mens souls. *1<sup>st</sup>*. Those that are concerned in the lives and healths of men. For if they fail, they do certainly make themselves obnoxious to the very letter of the sixth commandment, *thou shalt not kill*. I take it for granted, that if those who are engaged in those trades and professions that refer to the lives and healths of men, as those that are concerned in meat and drink and medicine, if they fail, they are very great sinners and obnoxious to the sixth commandment ; and no apology for them, to use things that are either naught and unwholsome or not well prepared, for the advantage of gain ; for that is the temptation. Then, *2<sup>dly</sup>*, Those that are concerned in the state of mens souls ; if they do comply with mens fancies and ungrounded imaginations, and set themselves to gratify these ;

these ; their miscarriages are very high. The xiii of *Ezekiel* the whole chapter is spent for the reproof of these : and the apostle in 2 *Cor.* ii. 17. *For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God, &c.* 2 *Pet.* ii. 3. There we read of those that practised upon the word, and made merchandise of mens souls. And this as to *commutative* justice, and the rule and measure of right in all trade and profession, in buying and selling. — Then as to the other part, *distributive* justice, here not only the proportion of things, but the respect of persons is to be taken into consideration ; and this is known in distributing rewards and proportioning punishment. 1. In distributing rewards. Greater rewards are due for the actions and employments of those whose skill depends upon a leisurely, tedious, costly and expensive education, than to those who do acts proceeding from natural strength, which a man is born to, and it costs him nothing. 2. Then for inflicting of punishments. Since faults are aggravated by their relation to persons, and to the committer of them ; (for any fault or any sin is aggravated by the height, excellency, place, dignity and power of the person that doth commit it ; ) punishments therefore are to be proportioned accordingly, and are more or less due upon this consideration : a fault is greater because such a one commits it ; a man of place, education, knowledge, one that hath other advantages and other engagements, the fault is aggravated by his advantages and by his engagements, which another that wants them, his fault is less, though materially the same. If a man steal for the necessity of his soul, no man despiseth him ; but if a man steal out

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out of wantonness, the fault is aggravated. *If those that despised Moses, law, died without mercy, &c. of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the son of God, &c.?* This I have added, to declare to you the rule and measure of justice, either *commutative* or *distributive*.

The second is, what the notion of justice and righteousness is, when it is attributed and ascribed to God. And this is worth your consideration; for in this particular there are very great mistakes: therefore I answer; righteousness and justice, when it is ascribed to God, imports one of these three things. 1. Sometimes it imports God's *faithfulness* in keeping his promises. 2. Sometimes his *uprightness* and integrity in his actions. 3. Sometimes his *graciousness* in pardoning our failings. And I dare say, all scripture that attributes righteousness and justice to God, doth denote one or other of these: a scripture of each.

1. For the first; sometimes it imports Gods *faithfulness* in keeping his promise. *Heb. vi. 10. God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love.* This must be in respect of his word and promise; for no creature under heaven doth merit any thing of God, and God is engaged to no creature but by his promise; for he is not profited by our goodness, nor hurt by our wickedness. *God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love*; that is, God is not unfaithful, to perform his free and voluntary promise. And our Saviour hath taught us, that when we have done all we can do, we are unprofitable servants; we have done no more than our duty. This is therefore the first. D 2 2. Sometimes



2. Sometimes you are to understand by Gods justice and righteousness, his *uprightness* and integrity in all his actions. And then it is perfectly the same with his holiness. And so, *righteous art thou, O Lord, and holy in all thy ways.* Psal. cxlv. 17. This is that which the church acknowledgeth to God, *Rev. xix. 2. True and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*

3. Sometimes by God's justice and righteousness, you are to understand his *graciousness* in pardoning and forgiving our failings ; as *Dan. ix. 7. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee.* How is this explicated ? look, *verse 9. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him.* And these are the sense of scripture, when it doth ascribe righteousness to God ; and all the scriptures that attribute justice to God, are to be understood in one of these three ways.

Now for God's punishing of sin, that is called in scripture his severity. *Rom. xi. 22. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, &c.* His goodness in forbearance and pardon : his severity in challenging and controuling. I can no where find in scripture, that justice in God doth import a necessity that lies upon God in respect of any perfection inherent in him, to punish. It is true, God is just if he do punish sin, *Rom. iii. 5.* but God is not unjust if he do not punish the sin that is repented of : for though God hath the right of punishment in the case of sin, tho'

tho' he hath this as a reserve and for his further security of his creatures loyalty and obedience ; yet he useth his right where he wills himself ; he punisheth if he pleaseth, and he hath patience where he wills, and he doth suspend and forbear and forgive upon the sinner's repentance ; but I can no where find in scripture what may give any security to contumacy in sin, and impenitence ; for such a sinner lies always open to God's severity ; and in this case it is very just for God to be severe, and to punish and controul the sinner, and make him a publick example, that others may be afraid and not do the like, seeing the consequences that follow upon it. And this distinction is of great use. It is just to punish, but no necessity lies upon God to punish, if there be repentance. The use of this notion is this ; this knowledge highly tends to animate and encourage those that fall, to rise by repentance ; and this doth keep in awe presumption, contumacy, and profaneness ; and those that take leave to transgress the rule of right, do right and wrong indifferently ; these persons, they are always in danger, always lie open to God's severity ; yea the goodness of God is engaged to controul them. God of his goodness doth punish contumacy : God of his justice and righteousness doth compassionate those that are penitent. Thus have I given you an account of this third perfection the apostle here insists upon ; *whatsoever things are just and equal.*

## DISCOURSE LXXIV.

*Whatsoever things are holy.*

PHIL. iv. 8.

*Whatsoever things are pure, holy, sincere, uncorrupt, unmixt, immaculate, clean, sacred ; these are all equivalent words.*

*Whatsoever things are pure.*

**I**N speaking to these words, I shall do these two things.

1. Shew you the scripture-use of this phrase.

2. What this charge is, that is here laid upon us.

I. What things are comprehended under the notion of purity or holiness in scripture-use ; and there are six several things comprehended under the notion of purity or holiness. *1<sup>st</sup>*. Sometimes by purity and holiness is only intended the bare, simple, down-right lawfulness of things, and it doth declare in the thing itself an indifferency, it may be done, or it may be left undone, according as the person is qualified and hath power. Thus St. Paul, Rom. xiv. 14. *I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is nothing unclean of itself ; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Unto the pure, all things are pure, Tit. i. 15.* *2<sup>dly</sup>*, Sometimes by purity and holiness, is meant innocency, uprightness and

and integrity of mens ways, the uprightness of mens persons and of their actions, their just, fair and equal dealing. And thus *Job's* friend saith to him, *Job* viii. 6. *If thou wert pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee, &c.* And you have this sense often in the *Proverbs*, *Prov.* xx. 9. *Who can say I have made my heart clean, and I am pure from my sin?* *Pro.* xxi. 8. *as for the pure, his work is right*, *Mic.* vi. 11. *Jam.* i. 27. 3dly, Sometimes by it, we are to understand sincerity, true intention, honest meaning and simplicity of heart, in opposition to hypocrisy, fraud, cozenage and dissimulation, *Mat.* xxiii. 27, 28. our Saviour tells the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* there, *they were full of uncleanness*, because they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity, *Mat.* xv. 8. 4thly, It denotes separation from iniquity, from moral filthiness; and this some think to be the proper notion of holiness, *Heb.* vii. 26. *Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.* 2 *Cor.* vi. 17. *Wherefore come out from amongst them, and be separate, saith the Lord, keep thyself pure*, 1 *Tim.* v. 22. 5thly, It denotes a distinct use; when a thing is set apart from common and ordinary use, then it is said to be holy. So in the time of the *Mosaical* dispensation, there were persons holy, places holy, sacrifices holy, offerings holy, things holy; that is, they were separate from common use, and had a peculiarity *God-ward*. *Israel was holy unto the Lord*, *Jer.* ii. 3. 6thly, And lastly, this is peculiarly and remarkably attributed and ascribed to that particular virtue of chastity; and this is remarkably called *purity*, and the contrary *impurity*. 1 *The.* iv. 7. *For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

1 *Cor.*



I Cor. vii. 34. That peculiarly hath the denomination of holiness.

II. I am in the second place to shew you what charge lies upon us, upon account of this perfection of purity or holiness. *1st.* We are charged to confine ourselves within the compass of things lawful in the use of our liberty, and not to exceed those bounds, and we are never to use power or privilege beyond reason or against right; if we do, we are downright impure and unholy. *2dly,* We are charged to be innocent, holy, harmless, upright in all our ways, righteous in all our dealings; to give no offence, to do no wrong. *3dly,* We are required to be sincere, single-hearted; always to mean as we express, and to mean God, goodness, righteousness and truth. *4thly,* We are charged to put away from ourselves all iniquity and filthiness. *5thly,* We are charged to have a just reverence for ourselves, as taken into a peculiarity Godward. *Reverere te ipsum,* was a great rule of old. You are God's peculiar, the special care of his providence; to you he hath made his promises. You stand in a peculiar relation to God; therefore reverence yourselves. *6thly,* And lastly, We are charged to maintain chastity of body and mind. These are the instances of real holiness; and, by thus doing, we shall make our *members instruments of righteousness* and holiness; *sin shall not have dominion over us*; and we ourselves shall become *servants of righteousness*, and have our fruit unto holiness.

And then for the negative; we are plainly called off from these things. I. From extending or enlarging our power or privilege to things that are unlawful

lawful and unaccountable : for there is no power to do that which is not fit to be done. 2. We are called off from all unrighteousness and iniquity both in our hearts and lives. 3. We are called off from all hypocrisy, dissimulation and falshood. 4. We are called off from all pollution, filthiness and sin. 5. From profaning any thing that is separate to a holy use, and that hath a peculiarity God-ward. 6. From all carnal lusts and filthy impurities.

Having given you an account of the notion of holiness in scripture language, and also of the materials of this charge. It is requisite in the next place that I give you an account likewise, of the great distinction of holiness ; *real holiness*, and *relative holiness* ; which is very necessary.

The subjects of real holiness are agents endued with understanding and liberty ; they, and they only, can be the subjects of real holiness ; of such agents there are but three sorts in the whole creation, *viz.* God himself, *angels*, and the spirits of *men*. All which three agree in this, that they are intellectual intelligent agents, and voluntary, indued with understanding and liberty, a power of acting out of fore-sight and consideration, and a true and formal intention of the end ; which none in the whole world but these three, are able to do.

1<sup>st</sup>. Holiness, as attributed to God, doth denote God's peerless majesty, together with infinite power and wisdom, as it is in conjunction with righteousness and goodness. And it is well for us, that God is cloathed therewith ; for it gives us the greatest security imaginable ; for if you could divide almighty-  
ness

ness from goodness, you would destroy holiness; for the other are perfections only as they are in conjunction with goodness. There is no true excellency if goodness be not in conjunction with it. This is holiness with God.

2dly, Holiness in angels and men doth import their deiformity, that is, their conformity to God according to their measure and capacity; in their being, in their measure and degree and proportion, what God is in his height, excellency and fulness; and by this holiness we bear the image of God; and man may be said to bear the image of God upon a threefold account. 1st, Man bears the image of God in his very make, in respect of the principles of his nature, as he hath the power of understanding, reason and intelligence, and the prerogative of liberty and freedom in these things he doth resemble God. 2dly, Man bears the image of God in respect of his sovereignty and government over the creatures below him, and this is man's royalty and prerogative. 3dly, But thirdly and chiefly, man bears the image of God in the goodness and purity of his mind; and this lies in his temper, constitution and frame of spirit. Now this leads him to choose and to do what is fit and convenient to be done, and to decline and avoid the contrary. Hereby he chooseth what is good and acceptable to God, and refuseth what is evil. By the former of these, man is capable of holiness; but by the other, man is actually holy: capable of holiness, as an intelligent and voluntary agent; but actually holy, by the goodness and purity of his mind. But

That I may the better declare what holiness and purity is, I say

*First.*

*First*, Real holiness is, our inward rectitude, uprightness, and conformity to the nature of God and the everlasting law of righteousness, goodness and truth; and this is that which God doth highly accept of us for: this makes us really deiform, that is, conformable to God in our measure and degree, and so far as he is imitable by creatures, and so far also as he can communicate to us. This real holiness is our participation of God and our resemblance of him, 2 Pet. i. 4. *That by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world thro' lust.* And this is final to the other, which is but in order to this; this is the true effect of a day of grace; and a day of grace in its ultimate issue: this gives us a fitness and capacity for glory. This makes us the members of Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 15. *Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ, &c.* This makes us to become the temples of the Holy Ghost, ver. 19. *Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you: if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy; which temple ye are.* Thus are men made members of Christ, united to him, related to him by this real holiness, and made an habitation of God by the spirit, 2 Cor. vi. 15, 16. *For ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* And so God becomes a father to you. Eph. ii. 21. *Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,*



*stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.* Agreeably hereunto is that of St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house; an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* ver. 9. *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* This is that which enables us to pray, lifting up holy hands, 1 Tim. ii. 8. *Whereas on the other side, the very prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

Now to give you a farther account. This real holiness imports something by way of *state*, and something by way of *habit*, temper, complexion and disposition of mind. 1st. Something by way of *state*, and then it either denotes absolute innocence guiltlessness and faultlessness: of such I am afraid there are none to be found among us mortals. Or else it denotes the state of justification, and so depends upon remission of sins and acceptance of mens persons in and through Christ; for this we acknowledge the great grace of God and gospel-institution, that repentance is available and effectual; and that God will be reconciled to sinners upon the terms that he hath proposed in the gospel; and repentance doth so far alter the case, that he that hath offended, if he doth repent of his fault, revoke it, condemn himself for it, and ask forgiveness, he is next to being innocent for sin, through the grace and favour of God, is as if it had never been committed, when the sinner hath repented and God hath pardoned. So that the first

degree

grow- degree of innocence is *non peccasse*, never to have of-  
ereun- fended ; but the next (which is a safe state through  
living the grace of the gospel) is *pœnituisse*, to have repent-  
sthood, ed and revoked, and to have God's pardon ; and our  
y Jesus repentance, and God's pardon, doth secure us. This  
a royal is the best of our case ; and though this be for the  
e should present short of the other, yet this is both a good and  
out of a sure state ; for tho' it cannot be said a man did not  
which sin, and tho' desert of punishment is consequent upon  
Tim. ii. sin, that is, inseparable, unavoidable upon sin ; yet  
of the through the grace of God, though the sinner be wor-  
thy of punishment, yet he is out of danger ; for this  
his real is the effect of remission of sins, to take off the obli-  
d some- gation to punishment. Now the former of these two  
d dispos is only to be verified of the state of innocence ; such  
te, and was the state of *Adam* in the moment of his creation,  
tleness and such was the state of our Lord and Saviour, who  
re none was separate from all sin. But it is the latter case  
denotes with all mortals : for we have all suffered shipwreck,  
a remis- we have all proved bankrupts, we have all sinned and  
in and come short of the glory of God. The scripture hath  
e great concluded all men under sin, *Gal. iii. 22*. The scrip-  
pentance ture doth not make men sinners ; but when it con-  
l be re- cludes all men under sin, it speaks as the truth of the  
ath pro- case is ; *for there is none righteous, no not one*, *Rom.*  
far alter ii. 10. Therefore our plea is the grace of the gospel  
doth re- and the terms of the new covenant, 1 *John i. 9*. *If*  
f for it, *we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us*  
nocent ; *our sins*, 1 *Cor. i. 30*. *But of him are ye in Christ*  
s, is as in *Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness*  
ner hath *sanctification and redemption*, 2 *Cor. v. 21*. *For he hath*  
the first *made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we*  
degree might

might be made the righteousness of God in him : that is, (when it is said we are made righteousness) we are through the relation we stand in to God through Christ, and in pursuance of the terms of the covenant of grace, absolved, acquitted and discharged from all obligations to punishment ; and that is to be made righteous, *Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ ;* so *1 John ii. 2. He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* *1 John iv. 10. He hath loved us and hath sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins.* *1 Cor. vi. 11. the apostle mentions a great many sins ; and adds, such were some of you, as bad as any, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, &c. and so are discharged from all obligation to punishment.* And to mention no more, *Rev. vii. 14. Their robes washed white in the blood of the lamb.* God made us at first in the state of the whiteness of snow, the state of absolute innocence : but now we have lost that, we must have our garments washed white in the blood of the lamb for this holiness of state. Then 2dly, There is holiness in respect of *habit*, temper and disposition of mind, a frame of spirit, a constitution and complexion of soul ; whence are inclinations and propensities to acts of goodness and virtue. It is in effect when a man's nature is reconciled to God, and truth and righteousness thro' a divine participation that a man's choice and delight is in the things that are according to the mind and will of God, and both harmonize with the law of heaven ; and he finds a sympathy in his disposition to the law of righteousness. R

and an indisposition and antipathy to the contrary ; such abhorrence as was in *Joseph* when he was tempted ; *how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God ?* And this is intrinsic rectitude, inward health and strength. This is holiness ; it is a good principle of action, and makes a man fit for any performance ; for where holiness is, a man's mind will be free to all worthy actions.

Secondly, Relative holiness, that lies in a separation, a distinction, or an appropriated use. For, *relative holiness* doth not, at all, alter the nature and quality of things ; but of the relation, and use. Whereas *real holiness* mends the subject, and puts it into a sound constitution. It gives an inward tincture and colour to the mind. It gives a right temper, complexion and constitution to the soul. Things that are altogether incapable of *real holiness*, may be *relatively holy* : but, only persons endued with understanding and reason, and privileged with liberty and freedom ; *these* only can be the subjects of real holiness. ——— To tell you, in short ; that that we call *grace* or *virtue*, (for, to me, they are all one) *goodness* and *righteousness* *these* are that that we call *real holiness*. They sanctify the subject, by their presence : and wheresoever they are, the person is made good. On the other side ; vice and sin, which are, in themselves, impure and unholy things, *these* do defile the soul, wherever they are. Now things are *relatively holy*, either by God's institution and assuming, or by man's designation or voluntary dedication. But, *real holy* things are, by an intrinsic and inward rectitude and goodness. Relative holiness doth not depend upon the quality



quality of the thing, but wholly depends upon the will and pleasure of the agent ; upon some arbitrary act of him that hath power ; and so is mutable and of a dispensible nature and at the pleasure of the superior : for God may assume into a relation to himself, either persons or things. God may assume a thing to signify something from him, to exhibit something from him ; it may be God's instrument, and afterwards he may lay it aside and make it common again : and things relatively holy have been abated and omitted (even where the things have been under the command of God ; and of his institution,) and have returned to their ordinary use again. By thus assuming, he makes it holy ; that is, it shall have a special relation to him, and a peculiarity and property of God shall be upon it ; it may be peculiarly God's instrument : and he may un sanctify it and make it common again. As for instance. 1. The *brazen-serpent* in the wilderness ; it was God's instrument, and, by God's appointment, holy ; and it was good for the people for a time, and of great use for those that were bitten by the fiery serpents, who by looking up unto it were healed. And it was typical in a sort, and exhibitiv of Christ, and resembled our application to him : after a while it is deserted of God and returns to be common as it was before ; and *Hezekiah* is reported well of, for destroying it with some contempt. When it was abused, it was not only divested of its dignity, but reduced to common use. It was brass before, and it was (*Nehushtan*) a piece of brass again. Therefore, those things that are *relatively holy* ; that is, separate from common

and ordinary use ; their holiness may be taken off ; and they return to their ordinary and common use again. But *real holiness* of persons, their principles, and their actions ; that can never be released ; is never to be dispensed with ; in no case, to be avoided or discharged : never any abatement or relaxation, never any failure to be in *this*.

2. Another instance, *circumcision*, that great ceremony among the *Jews* : it was a holy rite, because it was appointed by God, and had its use and signification ; yet it slept for forty years together, that is, during the children of *Israel* being in the wilderness ; it was suspended out of respect of the conveniency of their travel, as you may find *Jos. v. 7*. For *this* had no *internal* holiness, neither did it make the persons *pure*, only it did make the persons *separate for God*.

3. Another instance. *The shew-bread* was holy in the use of it ; and it was not allowed to the use of any but to holy persons, the priests : yet it is said, *David* and his men, when in necessity, made bold with it, and our Saviour justifies it, *1 Sam. xxi. 6*. and *Mat. xii. 4*. Now that it was appropriate to the priests, you may find *Exod. xxix. 32*. and *Levit. viii. 31*. This relative holiness, in *David's* necessity is dispensed withal.

4. Our Saviour also gives another instance, *Mat. xii. 5*. *Have you not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath and are blameless ?* The explication is this : there was prohibited on the sabbath day the doing of any work : but the priests did profane the sabbath and were blameless ; and how they did profane the sabbath,

you shall find, Num. xxviii. 9. *And on the sabbath day thou shalt offer unto the Lord two lambs of the first year, without spot, and two-tenth deals of flour, for a meat offering mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof. This is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.* So that there was a great deal of drudgery in preparing and offering the sacrifice : and this the priests did on that day, and were blameless. So that you see that things that are only relatively holy, may be over-born and abated ; but never any dispensation in any point of real holiness.

5. To this purpose 'tis very observable, that of *Belshazzar*. The consecrated vessels of the temple had a peculiarity to God, and holiness was upon them ; for God had appointed them and set them apart for holy use. *Belshazzar*, he rifles the temple, and carries them away to *Babylon* : God suffers this, as if he took no notice of it ; but when *Belshazzar* took upon him at his banqueting to revoke the consecration, you see how angry God was, and writes a terrible doom against him. So that tho' God will yield to the necessities of men in things that are relatively holy ; yet we must not take upon us to vary from divine institution, but where there is true reason ; for you never find since the creation, that God upon any terms did ever give the least allowance to any immoral or impure act.

6. Another instance. Good *Hezekiah's* passover, which was kept with undue time and circumstances, and otherwise than 'twas appointed ; yet it was honourably accounted of. There was as much regard

to

to be had to the circumstances, because determined by God, as to the substance of the thing : but now there being reason in the act, and done not out of wilfulness or contempt to God, but in integrity ; the failure of this relative holiness is passed over and supplied with real, as good *Hezekiah* prays, *2 Chron. xxx. 18. The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary : and the Lord hearkned to Hezekiah and healed the people.*

7. Another instance. *Saul's* sons, they were hanged for six months together to make an atonement for *Saul's* transgressions, *2 Sam. xxi. 7, 9* ; and this was expressly contrary to the law, as you find, *Deut. xxi. 23.* where it was appointed that every one that was hanged should be taken down at sun-set.

8. Once more. The nation of the *Jews*, they were a holy nation, and a peculiar people ; they were appropriate unto God : but they are now in an absolute parity as to God and as to eternal life ; and now all nations are as holy as they ; and *St. Peter* is taught this by a revelation from heaven : this *leaven*, 'tis true, remained with him, but it was wrought out by a vision from heaven repeated again and again. He was in this narrowness of spirit ; he would have nothing to do with the *Gentiles*, *nothing common or unclean, &c.* But he is reprov'd ; *what God hath sanctified, call not thou unclean, &c.* and he is made (when he comes to understand the vision) to break out into the best words that ever man spake (a place of scripture fit to be written with letters of gold :) and thus he expresses himself ;



himself ; *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him,* Acts x. 34, 35. Such a person is holy, and none but such a person is holy, neither by pretended descent from *Abraham*, nor by any other circumstance whatsoever, but by fearing God and working righteousness. Our Saviour hath expressly told us, *Mat. xv. 11. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man ; but that which cometh out of the mouth ; (all immorality :) for, out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornications, thefts, &c.* And these are the things which defile the man.

9. Further, *the priestly office*, so far as it was typical, ceased. It gave way to the everlasting gospel ; when the true high priest *the Lord Jesus* appeared. We have indeed, now, *rational instruments*, that are workers with God, helpers of mens faith, preachers of righteousness, to edify the church, to admonish men, to help mens understandings, to help mens memories, to satisfy disturbed minds, to help men to compare scripture with scripture, to administer ordinances, &c. And by *these* is the faith of men greatly advantaged. Now *these persons* because of their employment, office, state, function, are *in order to God*, and belonging to him ; and may be said to be *holy*, with this *relative holiness* : for, we have things that are also relatively holy, now, in the christian church, as *this ministerial office, the Lord's day, the sacramental elements* ; these are holy because of their *ends* : for these are set apart for purposes supernatural ; and therefore are not for common use.

*These*

*These* are several instances that shew, that things that are *relatively holy* have been dispensed with, abated, and omitted, in the times of the greatest severity : but *real holiness* never. Wherefore things *relatively holy* have never been equalized with things *really holy* ; but have always been in order to *real holiness* ; and were intended as subservient to it, and for its security : and, in competition, have been undervalued, *Hos.* vi. 6. *Mic.* vi. 6. *Isa.* i. 11. and lxvi.

3. Now, *our holiness* is *our imitation and resemblance of God* ; and consists of *three things*. First, *our straightness, uprightness, rectitude, in ourselves* ; in respect of *our temper, make, constitution, and principles*, of which we do consist. Secondly, *our rectitude and uprightness towards God* ; who is *our principal object* : by whom we *were* ; to whom we *tend* : who *stands* in all places, and fills all relations to us : the object of all adoration and worship. He is to us *original*, and ought to be *final* ; the center of our souls : and the only object, in the enjoyment of whom we are happy. Thirdly, it is *our rectitude and uprightness, in respect of our fellow creatures*.

As to the first. *Man*, as an intelligent and voluntary agent, endued with reason and understanding, and privileged with liberty and freedom ; having dominion and government over body, and bodily sense ; and having the rule and government of his own spirit, it is requisite that his *better* part be predominant over his *inferior*, to wit, that his intellectual nature do govern his inferior and sensitive powers and faculties. Therefore, that a man may be right and straight in himself ;

himself ; it is requisite, that he do maintain an order of his powers and faculties ; and that there be a subordination and dependence of all *inferior* faculties in him, to those which are *superior*, and which ought to govern. And *this* belongs to our *rectitude and uprightness in ourselves*. It is *obliquity* and *unholiness*, when the powers and faculties of mens souls are in confusion, and in mutual opposition and contestation, when it is with a man, as it is said in the *tragedy* ; “ By my reason and understanding, by my superior powers and faculties, I judge and discern, that *this* is best and convenientest : but, my inferior faculties draw me from it.” *Eurip. Med.* This is an unholy and impure state, when *that* that is by God’s order and institution, and the original appointment of nature, the *governor* in man, and that should, and ought to govern ; when *that* is dethroned, and put out of possession ; and the inferior faculties have usurped authority : and all things are in hurly-burly and confusion ; impotent passions have the rule : and *man’s reason* is disturbed. — Rectitude and uprightness are the health and purity of a man’s soul. A man is, *then*, right and straight : he is whole within himself ; and all things are as they should be. There should never be any transporting imaginations ; no discomposure of mind : for, that is a failure in the government of a man’s spirit. There ought to be no eagerness, or inordinacy, towards the things of this world. We should not be borne down towards objects of sense. There ought to be serenity and calmness and clear apprehensions, fair weather within ; that that the noble *Platonist* calls *steadiness*

*of mind and understanding, an intellectual calmness* : a just balance ; an equal poise of a man's mind, no perplexity of soul ; no confusion ; no provocation ; no disturbance ; no perturbation. A man should not be born off from himself, or put out of himself, because things without him are ungoverned and disordered ; for, these disturbances do unhallow the mind, lay it open, and make it common. If the mind be thus disturbed and discomposed, then *that* whereby a man should judge and discern, *that* whereby a man should resolve and determine, *that* whereby a man should govern himself, is diseased, and sick : and, then, a man is in a lost case. This is as if a man's eye were blood-shot, and less fit for its office. So, in the same manner, the mind not being pure, is not apt to receive, nor able to discern the truth of things ; it is an injudicious mind ; not qualified for its operation.——Modesty, meekness, gentleness, are the mind's *qualifications*. The rule of equity is the mind's *balance* : its *temper*, the love of rectitude. —— *These* things belong to the health of a man's mind and soul. *These* are the just temper, complexion and happy constitution of a man's mind.——To conclude. To the state of rectitude belongs right *reason* in the throne, submission of the *will* hereunto ; obedience of the *appetite* to the apprehensive parts ; harmony of the *affections* to the mind's sense ; love and delight to all known truth. —— The contrary to these, is impure untrue, unsincere ; neither complying with God's creation, nor any after-institution ; but is base-born, illegitimate, upstart, and maintained by violence. I will conclude this with the saying of *Boetius* ; *Gaudia pelle,*



*pelle, pelle timorem, &c. Nubila mens est, vinetaque  
frænis, hæc ubi regnant.* “ Rid yourselves of trans-

“ porting joy, and discouraging fear ; deluding hope  
“ and confounding grief. For, the mind is clouded,  
“ fettered and in bonds, where these have any place.

The second thing in which holiness consists, is,  
rectitude and uprightness, *in respect of God.* For, the  
intellectual nature hath special reference and relation  
to God. All mind and understanding hath tendency  
towards God. It was well said by the philosopher,  
“ God is more essential to us, than that that is most  
“ ourselves ; and is supreme to that which is in us  
“ sovereign.” *Simplicius.* And so long as the soul  
of man is fixed, and fastened, and rooted in God ;  
so long, it draws sap and life, and nourishment, and  
vital influence ; thrives, prospers, and retains all its  
perfections, emoluments and qualifications, with  
which God did at first make it. All its powers, a-  
bilities and faculties remain whole and entire. But,  
if any way, the soul of man be torn off from God, ei-  
ther by our own act of wilful departure, or by igno-  
rance, or by any other ways ; it withers, and fades,  
shrivels up, and comes to nothing ; till it do again,  
by regeneration and good affection, return to God,  
and rest in him. For, if the mind be off from God ;  
it is off from its original : and, that is mischief e-  
nough. For, *that* that is original to first-being, is  
conservative to all after-being. If a man, by dege-  
neration, be fallen off from God ; he is deprived of  
his conservative cause ; he is off from his center ; he  
is cross to his end ; he is in a state of deadly sickness,  
and present death. God is our principal object : and,

our

our chief and proper employment is about him. And, indeed, were it not for man's capacity for God ; if our rational faculties had no employment about God, but were intended only for the drudgeries of the world ; it had been better for man to have been made in a lower order. Had we been to have had our adequate employment here below ; been made to converse with the creatures which now we govern ; we should have been more happy, a great deal, if more equal to them. For, there is not so free converse, where there is inequality. A man cannot communicate himself to the creatures below him : they cannot understand man, as an equal ; but as a governor. It had, therefore, been better for man, had he been made less ; if he had been only to have employed himself about beasts : because he, and his employment would have had a greater harmony. It is therefore in nature, that this is founded (*viz.*) Our relation *God-ward* ; our motion *upwards* ; our converse *with separate spirits* ; because the mind of man hath no adequate employment in converse with creatures below. It had been a blot in the creation of God, and an imperfection, for a man to be so much raised above the beasts ; if he were made only to converse with *them*. But, in that he is so much raised above the lower creation ; in that a man is capable of receiving from God ; it must be, that *God* is his peculiar and proper object. And, if there be a diversion of him from *God* ; all the things in the world are short and unsatisfactory.——All indisposition *God-ward*, all aversion from him, and contradiction to him is man's obliquity and deformity : and it is his impiety

impiety and unholiness. The *reasonable part* in man is God's *mansion* ; it hath the impression of God upon it : it hath a peculiar reservation for God ; and its happiness is in its employment about God. And (as *Seneca* reasons) " It is the image of the creator, " copied out in the creature." — This is the force of our Saviour's argument, *Mat. xxii. 20.* when he was asked a captious question ; whether the free-born *Israelites* were subject to pay tribute to *Cæsar* ? an ill intended question : but see what a brave notion our Saviour gives us, in his solution ! If he had said, *they should not* ; he had made himself obnoxious to *Cæsar's* power : if he had said, *they should* ; he had, then, betrayed the honour of his people ; the people of the *Jews*, whom God had chosen. But he saith, *Bring me a penny. Whose image and superscription doth it bear ?* Then, the rule is ; *let every body have his own* : give to *Cæsar* that which is *Cæsar's* ; and to God that which is *God's*. Here is our Saviour's argument. If the mind of man bears God's image, hath God's superscription upon it (as certainly it hath ; ) then give it God, use it in the service of God ; employ it about God, in tendering acts of homage to God, and acts of faith and affiance in God, &c. — And *this* for the second holiness ; as it doth import a man's rectitude and uprightness, in respect of God. First, well constituted *in himself* : and, secondly, rightly postured *towards God*.

*Thirdly*, We come to consider holiness, in respect of a man's fellow-creatures : that a man stand right and straight towards his fellow-creatures. And this takes in man, as he is made a *sociable creature* : made

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for converse with those that are his equals, to receive from them, to communicate to them, to be better for them, and to better them. Then, in respect of the inferior part of the world. God hath made him the governor : and, in respect of *them* man is required to exercise such government as God exerciseth over his creatures ; that is, not wilful government, not violent, tyrannical, unmerciful. For, *the merciful man is merciful to his beast*, Prov. xii. 10. It is *unholy* for a man to be furious, provoking, injurious, boisterous, troublesome, mischievous ; to ly heavy upon the world ; so to behave himself, that those that are under him, their souls are sad and troublesome to them, because he lies heavy upon them. *These* are instances of *unholiness*, and expressive of an *unholy temper* : *foul usage, hard measure, cruelty, oppression, want of moderation* ; any thing *extremely* done, in the rational world of mankind ; or *violently* done in the inferior world of sensitives. *These* are monstrous effects of *impure* tempers, and *unholy* dispositions. *They* are contradictory to the law of the upper world. For, gentleness, meekness, fairness, ingenuity, tenderheartedness, readiness to do good, calmness, benignity, moderation, &c. *these* are the declarations of divine communication to men ; and belong to man's holiness, uprightness, and integrity, in the carriage of himself in *God's* family, towards his *fellow-creatures*.

To conclude, a man is *holy*, when he stands so affected, as I have here expressed. And, I take it for granted, so far as you fail and miscarry in any of these ; so far your spirits are unsanctified ; and you are in a state of variation from God, and contradiction to him.

Now



Now the opposites to real holiness, which generally go under the name of impurities; and according as the scripture hath expressed them; I will reduce to seven heads. 1. The first sort are sins of worldly-mindedness: these are reported in scripture to be things of an impure and unholy nature. All alienation of the mind from God, and from things that are divine and spiritual and connatural to heaven-born souls. All these things are impure: of this sort are these; all covetousness, all inordinate affection, all evil concupiscence. 2. A second sort, are sins of carnality and brutishness, which do infect and poison holy souls with bodily steams and noisome lusts: of this nature are sins of uncleanness, lasciviousness, fornication, adultery, and the sin not to be named, called *sodomy*; and then intemperance, drunkenness, gluttony, through the excess of appetite and liquorishness of the palate. 3. The third sort are sins of mental intoxication, and of a creature's self-exaltation; such as arrogance, haughtiness, pride, presumption, self-assuming, vain-glory. 4. The fourth sort are those that are of the devilish nature, hurtful and destructive to others, principles of malign operation among men, and disquieting God's family; such are fierce anger, wrath, envy, malice, rage, spite, cruelty: of this spirit are those that are inventors of mischief, make-bates, whisperers, backbiters, furious, cruel, unmerciful, murderers, &c. 5. Sins of unrighteousness; when men deal with others, not according to common law or rule of right, but according to their own arbitrary wills and unreasonable desires; of this sort are over-reaching, oppression, extortion,

tortion, thievery, inhumanity, unnaturalness to parents and relations, unreasonable dealings. 6. The sixth sort are sins, which boldly dare God himself and affront him to his face, as atheism, irreligion, blasphemy, hating of God, and idolatry, or making the name of God a stalking-horse, as hypocrites and dissemblers do; making use of the credit of religion for worldly advantage, only to gain repute, that they may more effectually cheat and cozen. 7. Sins of wicked confederacy, sins in conjunction with spirits in rebellion and disobedience and off from God, as witchcraft, forcery, diabolical spells and charms, &c. These are the persons that in the judgment of holy scripture are unholy and profane.

This explication that I have made of holiness doth import and carry with it these four things. 1<sup>st</sup>. That we are under a double obligation to holiness: the first of nature, the second of grace; for it is that which we were made to, and it is that which we are restored to. It hath in it the effect of God's creation; it hath in it the intent and purpose of Christ's restoration. Holiness, it was the constitution of our natures; and it is the true complexion of grace. 2<sup>dly</sup>. Before we engage in any action, or charge our selves with any undertaking, we ought to consider and examine, judge and discern the reason and difference of things; for we are absolutely bound up to the rule of right, and all power and privilege and perfection are within the bounds and limits thereof: and it is irregularity and exorbitancy in any creature, to exceed the said rule of right, to transgress, vary from, or exceed it. 3<sup>dly</sup>. That we ought to begin  
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at the refinement and purgation of the inward man : for the naughty disposition of the heart, and the undue sense of the mind, vitiates whatsoever is in pursuance, whatsoever follows in execution. *4thly*. In all acts of worship and devotion, there is to be a necessary conjunction of the devotion of the mind with bodily gesture and outward performance ; for else it is not piety but hypocrisy.

Now to speak of these, shall be the improvement of all that I have said upon this subject, that is, concerning holiness.

*1st*, That a christian is under a double obligation to holiness ; the obligation from the principles of God's creation, and from the intent and purpose of Christ's restoration and redemption. *1st*. The law of nature and creation in the first place, which imports rectitude of all powers and faculties, and a due posture of a man's mind towards God ; and then this is farther reinforced and established by the principles of christianity : so that to be right and upright, we are under a double obligation.

*2dly*, Since there is so known a difference as fitting and unfitting, good and evil, just and unjust, unholy and holy, sacred and profane ; it concerns us to be advised, and sit down and weigh and examine before we proceed to action. It is not safe to engage in bodily practice, before an act of judgment and discerning ; for it belongs to religion and conscience to avoid all ways of unrighteousness, and to perform all duties of holiness. It is a vain thing for any one to pretend to sacrifice ; it is a vain thing for any man to make application to God, by way of supplication or prayer

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which nature directs a man to, and nothing is more common or usual ; but yet this, I say, shall be without success and ineffectual, if we be profane : if we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear our prayers. Two things are indispensably necessary to a holy state, viz. judgment of right, and conscience to perform according to such judgment : to be rash and inconsiderate, or wilful and head-strong, they do not become the state of religion nor our state of fallibility.

3dly, It is best to begin at the right place, the reformation and purgation of the inward man ; for to those that are defiled and unholy, all things are impure. Withhold the mind's consent from evil, and evil will be strangled in its own birth. True goodness begins at mental illumination : for let the world say what they will, this is the rule and this will prevail, and this will be the law whereby we shall be judged to eternity ; compliance with the reason of right, with things.

4thly, In worship we are not to separate things that are of necessary conjunction. Now they are the devotion of the mind, together with outward performances ; not outward formality and inward profaneness. Let the body be observant, but let us not rest in bodily services or any thing that is external. That man can believe any thing, that can believe that God who is a spirit can be worshiped any way where the spirit is absent : it is the stupidest, weakest principle of the papists, that ever was held forth in the world, that say intention is not necessary in worship.

But



But because this is a business that hath great place in religion, I must not dismiss this subject without some arguments of recommendation and inforcement, and that in four particulars. 1. Holiness speaks the very state of religion. It is the health, strength and soundness of our minds. It is the divine life of our souls : as impurity doth denote the very state of sin, and is the internal malady and disease of the mind, the degenerate and diabolical life ; so is holiness the contrary. 2. Holiness is the ultimate issue, the intent and purpose of all the institutions that are, or have any place in religion ; all else of religion, the ceremonial or the instrumental parts of religion, it is all insignificant, if there be not the state of holiness ; if men be not inwardly renewed, and sanctified and reconciled in their nature and disposition, to the nature, mind and will of God. All the institutions in religion may be comprehended under the notion of sacrifice ; and sacrifices of all sorts have been always valued by God, and accordingly received and admitted, or rejected and refused, as they have been accompanied with holiness ; and if any sacrifice hath been at any time offered to God by way of competition or commutation, it hath been an abomination. 3. All the denunciations and threats that are from God in holy scripture, all the executions of the divine judgments in pursuance of those threats and denunciations, also all the monitions, warnings and exhortations that have been in scripture, also all the promises of God and assurance of great rewards, they do all finally aim at holiness, and are the very means and instruments of it ; and they are said to receive the

*grace of God in vain*, who are not instructed and reformed by these. 4. Holiness is the term to which all the great motions of religion do bring us ; which are sometimes called conversion, sometimes regeneration, nativity from above, divine illumination, and mortification ; now all these are but names and notions ; and we deceive ourselves about them, if they do not end in holiness.

Now I will conclude all with ten considerations that (I hope) will effectually recommend holiness to us. 1. Holiness is our compliance with our original and our conformity therewith ; infomuch that we are averse and thwart and cross, and in a contradiction to the original of our being, if we are in a state of unholiness. Holiness is a fair draught of God himself upon the minds and souls of men, our participation of the divine nature : it is our imitation and resemblance of God, so far as we are capable. 2. Holiness, it becomes the state and dignity, and the rank and order of persons, who are in relation to God, we are taken into a relation to God, for we are the adoption of his grace : we are made an habitation of God by the divine spirit ; by regeneration we are born thereto, by glorification we shall be consummated and perfected. 3. It is the truth and substance of our profession. Profession without real sanctity, is a sign without the thing signified ; it is as the fig-tree with leaves, without fruit, which exposes the fig-tree to a curse. They who under the profession of religion attain the real effects of righteousness and holiness and are inwardly renewed ; they are blessed of God. But they that rest only in profession ; or satisfy them-

selves, that they are under a denomination ; they are near to a curse. 4. What is holiness here, the self-same thing is happiness hereafter : here, it is a thing begun ; hereafter, it is the same thing perfected : in this respect it is said, our conversation is in heaven ; a holy conversation is a heavenly conversation. 5. It is the very state of our implantation in Christ ; for if we be in Christ, we are new creatures, and all old things of the degenerate world are passed away, and all principles of the new creation are revived and restored : for we are chosen of God in Christ to be holy and without blame. 6. It is the justification of God in the sight of all the world, from all imputation of fondness and partiality, *viz.* that God doth act indifferently towards all persons whatsoever, and that he hath done the same in all ages ; he hath called men to holiness. 7. Holiness is our right constitution and temper, our inward health and strength, our soundness and perfection, our disposition and fitness to our several acts ; without it we have no true self-enjoyment, no right use of ourselves. 8. There are many good consequences follow upon the state of holiness ; as *first*, It puts to silence this world, that is given to clamour and reproach and revile the ways of God and religion : *secondly*, This gives men occasions to break forth into God's praise ; this makes men glorify God, *Mat. v. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.* But an unholy conversation is a scandal to religion, and an offence to men. 9. Holiness, it justifies the whole cause and concernment of religion : for by this we shall answer our Saviour's

Saviour's question, *Mat. v. 47. What singular thing do ye? What do you more than others?* Were it not for the virtue of religion in life, conscience might be thought to be but a colour and pretence: but an innocent, unblameable and harmless life, puts the cause of religion out of all doubt, and shews it to be a principle of life and power, not merely a name and notion. 10. And lastly, Holiness makes an apology for good things, that otherwise are liable and exposed to sinister interpretation. I will instance in four, and so conclude; government, patience, love and justice. (1.) Government and authority without this, might look like arbitrariness and arrogance, and the affectation of some persons, and usurpation over others: but by holiness it is vindicated from this charge; and in conjunction therewith it commands reverence. (2.) Patience might look like pusillanimity and dejection of spirit; whereas it is a powerful act of self-government, and bearing those things patiently that are unavoidable. (3.) Love might look like fondness and partiality and flattery, and respect of persons; if not rectified by holiness. (4.) Justice might be looked upon to be cruelty; but being in conjunction with holiness, it is justified, and nothing can be said against it.

In fine, holiness, it is that which sanctifies us here, and makes us capable of being happy in the enjoyment of God hereafter.



## DISCOURSE LXXV.

*Whatsoever things are lovely.*

PHIL. iv. 8.

*Whatsoever things are lovely or amiable.*

**T**WO things are requisite to make an action lovely. 1. When the work is worthy, in respect of the matter of it. 2. When it is done in a good mind, a noble temper, a high intention, a good disposition of the doer.

1. When the work it self is worthy, in respect of the matter of it : a noble performance, a generous and beneficial action, highly grateful and beneficial, such as another would not have done, such as the party, for whom it is done, did not deserve it, could not expect, could not require it, upon any account of right or reason.

2. A thing is accounted lovely in respect of the disposition of the doer ; when 'tis done in a good mind ; the principle in the doer was noble and generous, viz. it was done in love and pure good will, and upon the account of kindness ; and done readily and willingly, as also seasonably : it was done bountifully, without pre-engagement before or after expectation, not enslaving the party that is benefited, as courtesies frequently do : nothing is more grievous to an ingenuous person, than to be put upon remem-

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bring another ; nothing is a greater reproach to any man, than to have need of it.

Now in the former of these two, the rule of the action is the nature of the thing : in the latter, the principle of the mind is love and goodness and righteousness. The quality of the action and the disposition of the doer, are requisite to the loveliness of an action ; when the thing done is noble and generous, and when the principle of the doer is free and voluntary. *Lovely* is a rarity in the world ; it is the peculiarity of raised intellectuals and refined morals and well accomplished minds : it is the heroick virtue of the ingenuous : it is a flower in God's garden, not any thing growing in the wilderness of the world, but only found among those that are wise. So that you may say here, as *Solomon* saith of his virtuous woman, *Pro. xxxi. 29.* the conscience of right hath done well, the conscience of truth hath attained a good effect ; but this judgment of *lovely* doth transcend and excel them all. The former hath kept men within the compass of the knowledge of good and evil : but this divine quality raiseth men higher towards God. Now, this perfection *lovely*, of which I am to give you an account : it doth comprehend all the former perfections ; and doth superadd grace and ornament to them all. Therefore you have these scriptures, *Tit. ii. 10.* *That you may adorn the gospel.* To do a *lovely* action, is to bring a good report, and cast honour upon the gospel, *Rom. xiii. 13.* *Let us walk honestly.* The word in the greek is more emphatical than the word in the translation. *Let us walk with a grace.* So *1 Cor. vii. 35.* *That which is comely.* *1 Cor. xiv. 40.*

*Let all things be done decently, and in order.* Now that these words are very pregnant and emphatical, I will shew you, by the use of them in profane authors. The philosopher advising men to walk exactly, and according to the rule of reason and virtue, doth bid them consider the exact order, and regular motion of the heavenly bodies ; that thereby they may learn *what is comely, what is orderly*, (which are the words the apostle useth ;) that is : consider the exact order, and the regular motion of the heavenly bodies ; which, tho' the motion be quick and constant, and without cessation, yet through the regularity of them, there is no interfering ; there is no motion tending to conflagration, as our motion *below* is. We cross one another, and so exasperate and provoke. Learn therefore, by the motion of the heavenly bodies, what is comely in human converse. If you do fulfil this text, you are as beautiful, and as orderly in your motion, as the sun, moon, and stars ; which are known by their exact order. ——— Oh divine virtue ! Oh heroical virtue ! Oh divine communication, that raises men to act like God in the world ! For *lovely* is *God-like*, in a high degree : no fuller participation of the divine nature ; no exacter imitation of God ; no better holding him forth to the world. Those that call themselves *the children of God* dwell in love, and do *lovely* actions, 1 John iv. 16. I might hereto apply what St. Paul speaks, 1 Cor. xii. 31. *But covet earnestly the best gifts : and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way ; the way of universal charity, and of great benevolence ; which is not confined to a dole, now and then, to a beggar ; or a gift to an indigent* and

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and necessitous person (tho' popular usage have usurped the whole denomination of *charity* to this) but doth indifferently respect the whole creation; and doth appear in all the actions of human converse. It is wholly voluntary and unconstrained; the agent *taketh pleasure* in the good of others; and *satisfying himself* with it, as a *proper recompence*, that he doth good, and that others are the better for him. For, see how he expresseth it, in the following chapter, *1 Cor. xiii. Charity that suffereth long, and is kind*, ver. 4. what a composition is here? We are apt to say, *provoke me not to wrath*; but here, *it suffereth long and is kind*. He goes on: *a charity which envieth not*; but *taketh pleasure* in the good of all men: *a charity that vaunteth not itself*; *is not puffed up*: *a charity that is conjoined with great modesty and sobriety*; *doth not behave itself unseemly*; *seeketh not her own*; *is not easily provoked*, ver. 5. *a charity that thinks no evil*; but is void of all jealousies and suspicions. A charity which *never fails*, ver. 8. but shews itself at all turns. For, see how he goes on: (St. Paul thinks he can never word it enough :) *it beareth all things* by its own goodness, and ingenuous temper: it converts injuries to courtesies: *it believeth all things*, with favour and advantage to the speaker: *it hopeth all things*: it expects beyond present appearance: *it endureth all things*, ver. 7. This noble temper and disposition transcends all excellency whatsoever: it transcends *all faith*, ver. 13. it goes beyond *all knowledge*: it is beyond the power of *miracles*, ver. 8. yea, it doth transcend the case of martyrs, that is, if the spirit of  
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wrath or revenge be in it ; for, many that lose their lives do not die in *charity*.

And because I am now upon the highest excellency of our religion, that which speaks in us the highest improvement, and that which tends to the honour of our profession ; I will not pass this over slightly : but in order to make you understand this the better, I will shew it you, *first*, in instances, *secondly*, in cases.

*First*, in instances. This lovely, it is, *1st. the parent's disposition to the child* ; which meets not with meet recompence, nor due return for it, nor doth pre-consider it, nor stand upon it. The parent considers, advises, consults what he may do for the child's good, and hath no consideration of recompence or return ; but to make the child happy. He doth not look upon any advantage ; but is well satisfied with the child's welfare. If the child do well, he is well satisfied ; and if he meet with duty and affection from the child, he thinks it a farther obligation. Now the disposition of the parent to the child is so remarkable in nature, that in the greek we have a particular word for it ; it is *storge* which is a loving affection, and is found no where in the world besides : an affection that no man knows by sense (but only by notion) unless he be in the state of a parent. *Rom. i. 31.* Pray observe that the apostle there reckons up all the departures, and horrid apostacies from all the principles of reason ; and among these he puts in persons that have a relation to children, but are without *natural affection*, they are the prodigies of the world. Now this the scripture takes notice of, and inakes it an argument to divine affection, *Psal. ciii.*

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13. *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him.* *Isai. xlix. 15.* Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Here is a representation of this disposition and parent-like affection towards their children, that never thinks of making a gain, doth not consider what the cost will be, or how much of their estates will issue out. In all other bargains they consider this, but between them and their children there is no consideration of this; and though the parent hath emptied himself, he expects no return; but if he sees his child prosper, he thinks it is the best return; and if the child be but ingenuous and thankful, the parent looks upon it as an engagement upon him to do more.

2. It is *the benevolence of noble founders and benefactors*, who live not to know the objects of their charity, nor to receive their thanks, but provide for future times against their miseries and necessities; as suspecting *that* may prove to be true which is foretold, *Mat. xxiv. 12. The love of many shall wax cold.*

3. Another resemblance is *the benignity of princes and potentates*, whose height in the world makes them independent upon persons of a low degree, and whose worldly advantages put them above all possibility of recompence, retribution or retaliation; there can be nothing but acknowledgment; yet out of their nobleness they do good and gratify. This is expressed by the speech of *Mephibosheth* with *David*, *2 Sam. ix.*

8. Now *this* is, as the sun's influence upon these lower bodies, without any motive, or interchangeable com-

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communication. *He maketh his sun to shine on the evil, and on the good*, Mat. v. 45. the sun shines indifferently upon places ill affected, as well as upon profitable and good grounds ; and there is no reflection that can reach the sun. *This* is, as the clouds of heaven dropping upon dry and parched earth, which doth no more but open her mouth, and receive in the beneficial drops from heaven ; and, at a distance of time, is dry and thirsty, as before ; and expects the like again. Here is *high gratification* ! The effects of transcendent *goodness*, and great *benevolence* ! and no reciprocal return ; no interchangeable communication. The sun that shined *yesterday*, shines again *to-day* : the earth that was refreshed *yesterday*, it calls for more *to-day* ; and no return at all.

4. This is the good *Centurion*, building the *Jews* a synagogue : a very strange work indeed, for one that was a *Roman* governor, imposed upon them ; and when they looked upon themselves as enslaved by the *Romans* ; and that it was the expectation of the *Jews* that by their *Messias* they should be delivered from the *Roman* tyranny ; yet say they, *he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue*, Luke vii. 5. here was a lovely action.

5. It is the compassion of the good *Samaritan*, who set himself compleatly to relieve the wounded person : for he himself stays in his journey, and takes care that he may be conveyed to a convenient place, engages his own estate and credit ; when as a *Levite* and a priest pass'd by and neglected him, Luke x. 33, 34. Whereas this *Levite* and *priest* were, by their station and profession, bound to benignity and compassion :

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passion : *they* fail, and pass by a person in misery, unconcerned : And this *Samaritan*, who might have excused himself, by a national antipathy ; he takes care of him, sees him conveyed to a convenient place, and engageth his own estate and credit.

6. It is the love and faithfulness of *Jonathan* to *David* : and the affection that was between them, was transcendent to the love of the female sex ; 2 *Sam.* i. 26. who are eminent in two noble perfections, *modesty* and *loving affection* ; yet their love, it surpassed the love of women. For tho' *Saul*, *Jonathan's* father, well saw that *David* stood in his light ; and if he were not taken away, *Jonathan* should never succeed to the crown : yet nevertheless, *Jonathan's* respect to his friend could not be abated, as you find, 1 *Sam.* xix. 2. and 1 *Sam.* xx. 3.

7. It is *Mary's* ointment on our Saviour's head, *Mat.* xxvi. 7. his disciples were offended at it, yet she thought it little enough ; and which she did to cast honour upon him at his burial, when he should lie under the power of the world, die as a malefactor and be subject to all manner of scorn and contempt : our Saviour justifies her in the deed, and said, *She hath wrought a good work upon me ; for in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.*

8. It is the woman's tears who is said to have been a sinner, which is a deep denomination in scripture, *Luke* vii. 38. *And behold, a woman in the city which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisees house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of*  
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her head; and kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment.

9. It is *Joseph's* indulgence to *Mary*, whom he had espoused, as he supposed the case. For the text saith, that he being a just man and good-natur'd and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily, *Mat. i. 9.*

10. It is *Uriah's* resolution, *2 Sam. xi. 8, 11.* when *David* dismissed him, and bid him go down to his house and wash his feet, &c. But *Uriah* slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his Lord, and went not down to his house. And he argues thus, the ark, and *Israel*, and *Judah*, abide in tents, and my Lord *Joab*, and the servants of my Lord are encamped in the open field: shall I then go into my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As thou livest and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.

11. It is *Nebemiah's* generous disposition, *Nebem. v. 14.* Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the Land of *Judah*, from the twentieth year, even to the two and thirtieth year of *Artaxerxes* the king, that is twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor, &c.

12. It is *Joseph's* weeping over his brethren and excusing their ill fact, *Gen. l. from ver. 15. to 21.* When good old *Jacob* was dead, their hearts misgave them, and they said, *Joseph* will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto *Joseph*, saying, thy father did command before he died, saying, so shall you say unto *Joseph*; forgive, I pray thee, now the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin, for they did evil unto thee:

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*thee : and now we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father ; and it is said, Joseph was affected to hear that they should trouble themselves. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him : and his brethren also went and fell down before his face, and they said, behold we be thy servants : and Joseph said unto them, fear not ; for I am in the place of God : and he makes an apology for them, better than they would make for themselves ; that whatsoever they meant, God meant it for good : But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not, I will nourish you and your little ones ; and he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.*

13. It is *St. Stephen's* parting with the world, *Lord lay not this sin to their charge*, Acts vii. 60. whereas *Zechariah* dies with this in his mouth, *the Lord look upon it, and require it*, 2 Chron. xxiv. 22.

14. It is *St. Paul's* pains in the service of the gospel at his own charge, notwithstanding the power and authority he had to have his charges born him by others, 1 Cor. ix.

15. It is *Moses's* sympathy with his brethren, who when he might have been adopted heir of the crown of Egypt, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, Heb. xi. 25, 26.

16. It is the peradventure *St. Paul* speaks of, Rom. v. 7. *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man, some will even dare to die.*

*Lastly ;*

Lastly ; to supperadd that great example to all the rest : *the several actions of our Saviour's life, were lovely* ; for the evangelist tells us, *Mat. viii. 17. He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses* ; and this was a lovely condescension. But then the height of all, the fulness of all, the thing without parallel, and which transcends all the rest, *is, his laying down his life for his enemies*, Rom. v. 10.

Secondly ; Having given you a representation of the thing in *instances* ; I proceed in the second place to superadd particular *cases* ; that I may bring the notion down to practice. And

1. The first case is, to forgive injuries, and to lay aside all thoughts or purpose of revenge. *This I represent to you as lovely.*——*This* is contrary to the common guise of the world ; for the world doth account it dulness and sheepishness, to suffer wrong, and for a man not to do himself right.

2. To do good for evil, I speak not now, of what common reason will determine, or the cause of justice does require, under which every man's conscience is by virtue of a common principle of reason ; but of something above the strain and guise of the world or common apprehension.——Not one man of a hundred thinks he is bound to it : for no human law requires it ; and it is generally thought to be just, *to return the like to every man* ; and the rule of our Saviour's *resist not evil*, Matt. v. 39. is not reckon'd a precept, but a counsel ; and so above usage, custom, and practice.

3. To have patience invincible in case of provocation. For this is commonly alledged ; and it is

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thought a good justification of a man, if a man have transgress'd never so much ; *that he was provoked. Why did he provoke me ?* And men think this is a sufficient account.

4. Not to give way to jealousies, suspicions, or evil surmises, in case of doubtfulness or uncertainty of another's meaning in such and such an action. The rule of policy is, if any thing be doubtful, always to suspect the worst. But it is the height of religion to imagine the *best*, and to make a good construction. It is noble and generous to make a candid interpretation, where words and actions may incline to the contrary ; for an interpretation of grace and favour doth mend the quality of the action, and obligeth the party. And this is a noble way of *overcoming* a man.

5. To over-bear our resentment of an injurious action, by the recollection of former acts of kindness and courtesy. It is *extreme*, to make an old friend an enemy, for one mistake and miscarriage. But this is ordinary. For if *once* he fail ; if *once* he deny ; then you account him an enemy, and account him false. And then, *never trust him that is false : never trust a false friend* : so, he is concluded. This is hard measure ; for a man to wipe out the sense of many antecedent favours, and various expressions of faithfulness because through some unhappiness, the person hath been mistaken, and hath done an injury in the case. A man should rather think in this case, that the injury *now* done, was occasional, and accidental ; not intentional : because of the former good offices. Many think themselves disobliged, for abundance of favours,



vours, because of one mistake of later date. Now this is lovely, to let every man with whom we have to do, have this advantage. Let the experience we have had of his fidelity and faithfulness and many good offices formerly done, over-bear one failing of later date, and let him not sink under that rule of *devilish policy, never to trust a false friend.* Suppose it was an ill office, a real injury; let him have the advantage of all his former acts of friendship: and let these be considered, to overbear the sense of his last failure or miscarriage.

6. To be meek, calm and gentle, in the hands of fierce, furious and violent spirits; for in one way or other, all men are good for some purpose. Now it is highly christian, yea, also prudent, in converse, to draw every man forth according to his better part, and to help him to bear that which is his burden. For this is the rule, *bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,* Gal. vi. 2. It is even devilish to provoke a passionate man. If you make application to a man, at least observe his temper: if he be under the power of his complexion, he is not fit to be applied to, and must be forborn at that time. Therefore observe to take him in his good humour: for he is burden'd by his temper and constitution; and *thou art free.*

7. To be of a pacifying, peace-making and reconciling spirit. It is very common for men to comply with complainers; this is to please the humour, but mighty mischievous; for this is to settle in him an ill opinion, and certainly injures the absent person; for he is confirmed in his ill opinion, because you have

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complied with him. We ought in all reason to make the best of the man's case that is absent, because he hath not the opportunity to speak for himself.

8. To be of a tender disposition, ready to compassionate and help men in misery. The contrary to this was a foul miscarriage in *Job's* friends, tho' otherwise good and worthy men ; yet, out of a mistaken zeal, they lay heavy upon him ; and while they thought they had the cause of God to justify, they gave hard measure to their friend, and made him complain, *Job* vi. 14. &c. chap. xix.

9. To be ready to hinder other mens sins and harms. If men themselves be not faulty or hurt, they are apt to lay aside thought, and care ; whereas God's dishonour and our neighbour's hurt ought to affect us.

10. To rejoice in God's goodness to others, where we have no share, nor are ourselves concerned. It is nobleness and generousness of mind, for men to be satisfied and delighted in the good of other men.

11. To be a friend to goodness, virtue, sobriety, temperance, righteousness, where the contrary is in use and applauded. To be a friend upon all occasions to virtue, *upon its own account.*

12. In the next place, to be communicative of knowledge, ready to instruct the ignorant, lead the blind and weak, guide the feeble in ways of religion and good conscience. It is highly christian to give directions to the ignorant ; to help those that are under difficulties and discouragements, to guide those that are blind and ignorant ; this, I say, is noble and generous. There are some that keep all their noti-

ons to themselves, are very close and reserved, and pretend to keep God's counsel, will not communicate their knowledge, that they themselves may seem to be wonderful ; but this is narrowness of spirit ; this is not according to the rule, *be ready to render a reason of the hope that is in you.*

13. One instance more ; to keep the mind immoveable (so far as may be) and undisturbed by the casual contingencies of life. I mean, things that cannot be foreseen, and therefore neither to be prevented before-hand, nor easily to be amended afterwards. I speak of the things without us, and that are not in our power ; for many by suffering their thoughts and imaginations to run upon future casualties and contingencies, make their affairs present always worse than indeed they are ; and have no enjoyment of things present, because they antedate sorrow and trouble to themselves with future contingencies, which are only subject to providence. Now, in all reason, these things should not overbear us, over which we have *no power*. It is becoming the noble soul of man to be above the world ; loose to the world and independent on it : not to be beholding to the world for its welfare ; nor to fear it for its illfare. A man is not to seek himself, without himself : but, how many lose themselves in the world, and become slaves and drudges ? Some there are that feed the beast, the *luscious appetite*. Others there are that follow *the childish part* in themselves : their full and adequate employment, is the business of the body. Such have no free enjoyment of themselves.

14. Then,

14. Then, lastly, To be moderate in power, humble in prosperity, modest with great parts and gifts.

1. To be moderate in power ; for we know how apt and prone power is to exceed. 2. To be humble in prosperity ; for worldly prosperity is apt to make men insolent. 3. Modest with great parts and gifts, for the apostle tells us, *knowledge is apt to puff men up*, 1 Cor. viii. 1.

These are cases and instances I proposed to lay before you ; wherein, if you reach these rules, and comply with these notions ; you do that that is truly *noble generous, honourable ; that that is in resemblance and imitation of God* ; and that doth tend to advance the state of human affairs.—And this is to do *that that is lovely*. But yet there are three things that remain to be spoken to. You will possibly say, if this be a reality, in what way is it attainable ? Therefore I will

*First*, Declare the things that qualify and dispose for this perfection, and direct how a man may attain to such a refinement of spirit, to such an enlargement of soul, that he may be able to do things lovely.

*Secondly*, Give you persuasives to it, or arguments of recommendation of it.

*Thirdly*, Produce some inferences or matter of application.

*First*, How a man may attain this noble perfection, this divine qualification ; and what things prepare and dispose to this temper. And as to this, I propose three things. 1. Something in respect of God, between God and us. 2. Something in respect of ourselves. 3. Something in respect of others.



1. Something in respect of God, between God and us ; and that is, a serious consideration of what God doth for the universe. Consideration of excellent agents and their actions, is the way to affect our minds. No force reacheth the mind of man ; no man's mind is changed or bettered, but by his own particular consideration. If therefore you will bring yourselves to this temper, to do things that are lovely ; in the first place consider what God is, and what his actings and dealings with his creatures are. And if we propose to ourselves what God does in the world, and how he carries it in his family ; this consideration will promote in us this disposition and temper. For he is the universal father ; it is he whose family the whole world is ; it is he that doth maintain the whole universe, and doth settle and establish the order and government of things. And certainly we cannot write after a better copy : yea it is the definition of religion in us, divine imitation. Godliness is *god likeness* : by religion we are made that in measure and degree, what God is in his height, excellency and perfection. Now, see what God doth. He is universally good : *he maketh the sun to shine, without difference or distinction on the righteous, and the unrighteous : he maketh his rain to fall upon the just and the unjust*, Mat. v. 45. *he giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons*, Acts xiv. 17. Wherefore to have God in our sight, and to have right apprehension of him, and a sense of his love and goodness ; this above all things tends to the nobleness, amplitude, freedom and liberty of our spirits. For this we observe, that the greatness of an object, and the excellency

cellency of the act of any agent about a transcendent object, doth mightily tend to the enlargement and improvement of our faculties : whereas they who are employed in mean business, and are conversant about little objects, have nothing in them that is excellent, nothing free and generous ; but are of limited and narrow spirits.

2. Something in respect of ourselves : that is, be not in a worldly spirit ; be not in love with bodily ease ; give not yourselves up to the pleasure of sense ; be not over eagerly bent upon gain, but be loose to it. Now I reduce them to these two things, sensuality and covetousness ; for these do narrow the soul, and limit and confine its reaches and desires. First, sensuality mars the understanding, and makes a man brutish in his knowledge ; and if he be brutish in his knowledge, what will he be in those things that depend upon his knowledge ? For his understanding is the leading faculty, and no man transcends that. He that hath mean thoughts, will have but short, but poor performances. And, secondly, covetousness doth contract to a little and very narrow point ; so that there can be no motion in any large sphere of action ; for God and religion and the concernments thereof are nothing, where either a selfish spirit hath place, or covetous humours do reign. *That rule that is common, every man for himself ; and God for us all :* it is the effect of the lowest, the shallowest, the meanest, forriest spirit that is in the whole creation of God : and that frame and temper of mind doth make a man incapable of self-enjoyment.——In all competition of actions or objects ; man should always prefer

*that* that will do him good, and bring him to perfection, according to his *inward man*. For a man is more by his *soul*, ten thousand times, than he is by his *body*.

3. Then in respect of others, I here propose three things. 1. Suspect no body before-hand, till you have ground and cause from some experience. 2. Take up against no body upon bare report; for most certainly parties and prejudice are wholly incompetent to give testimony. 3. Impute no evil to any, by whom you do not know some. I repeat them again. 1. Have no man in suspicion beforehand, or without cause or ground from some experience. 2. Take up against no body upon bare report: for there are two things that should make a man suspend and not determine upon bare report, *viz.* the sense of parties, and prejudice. 3. Impute no evil to any one, of whom you do not know some. And further: make fair application, in an honest cause, to any person therein concerned; with a confidence and expectation, that he will do what is fit: and let him perceive your good opinion of him. If any thing in the world engage a man; this pre-conceived opinion, and right supposition, will engage, and oblige him. But, observe the seasonable time of speaking: and allow to every man for his pre-possession; for his anticipation, pre-conception, and his temper. This is christian prudence, and honest policy: and this will gain advantage, and increase good-will: and I dare say, both reason and religion will allow *this respect of persons*. There is another kind of *respect of persons*, which we disallow: But *this respect of persons* there

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is good cause for ; and it may be used. It is a great piece of prudence, to apply handsomely to men ; and to avoid the *darker part* of men ; and take them at the best : and, some are very good at it. These are the proposals I make, which tend to the enlarging a man's soul, and amplifying him, and qualifying him, to be an instrument to advance and promote the good of the world.

*Secondly*, I shall now propose some arguments of recommendation. The considerations as arguments persuasive for men to look after that nobleness of mind and largeness of soul that may enable them to perform lovely actions, are four.

1. It doth in a lively way declare divinity and speak God in the world. If it were fitting to make a comparison in the divine perfections ; I think, this a man may say of God, without limiting him or dishonouring him ; that among all the excellencies and perfections that do accomplish the divine nature, there is nothing that doth transcend or is more beautiful than benevolence and good-will, than being gracious and merciful and compassionate to his creatures.

2. It doth worthily credit the gospel. We have an account from historians of all times since the date of christianity, that nothing hath been to the hindrance of the progress of the christian religion in the world, so much as the unlovely behaviour of those that have professed it ; partly by their discontents, mutual provocations, and exasperations one of another ; partly their fond superstition, cheats and impostures,



postures, and ridiculous ceremonies ; and partly their failings and miscarriages of life.

3. It doth highly ennoble the spirits of men. For mens parts shrivel up and shrink into nothing for want of employment ; but mens spirits are raised and refined by free and generous actions. It is a certain rule, every man hath himself as he useth himself. He that doth employ himself as a drudge, he is himself a slave. But he that puts himself upon free, noble and generous employment, he doth enlarge the faculties of his soul. Men are settled in state and temper, by practice and use of themselves. It hath been observed (and I believe it is true enough) that men that have been of mean parts and ordinary perfections, after they came to be truly religious, their parts have grown upon them, and they have appeared to be other kind of men, and fitter and more able for all employment, than they were before ; and every way raised in all points to a good understanding. The account of this is easy. This is to be imputed to their application to God, their sense of God, and their attendance upon him, who is the noblest object in the world : for there is no motion in the world so generous and tending to the accomplishing the agent, as the motions of religion are.

4. This doth ultimately prepare for glory. These are the persons that do attain the immediate qualifications to the state of glory. It is they that are accomplished by noble virtue : they that have their intellectuals raised, and their spirits refined by virtue, these men are in a qualification for glory.

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*Thirdly*, From what hath been said, I infer three things.

1. This hath an honourable reflexion upon God, and affords us great consolation; for it represents God as the loveliest object in the world, that proposes and recommends such things to us.

2. Let christianity have its due value and esteem, such as the principles of it do deserve. There is no other institution that ever was set on foot in the world, that doth so much good in the world or doth so much polish the minds and spirits of men, as this institution of christian religion doth; some that have not professed it, have acknowledged, that it was the most sincere and entire institution that ever was in the world; wherefore, as it is said of God, *let God be true and every man a liar*, that is so far forth as they vary from God; so let it be said of christianity: let christianity be true, and let those that are pretenders to it, if they do not answer the ends of it, let them be detected of hypocrisy.

3. This is a challenge to the corrupt guise of this world, and the degenerate practice that is in it. Do we that profess ourselves to be christians, do lovely things? I will ask you certain questions, and which every man that cannot resolve affirmatively, may think himself challenged and reproached. Is it lovely to harbour envy, ill-will, displeasure? Is it lovely to pursue revenge? Is it lovely to spend your time in contradiction; disputing, contending and compromising? Is it lovely to be altogether for ourselves, right or wrong, and to disparage, to under-value others? Is it lovely to be grievous and burdensome and lie heavy

heavy upon them with whom we live, and with whom we have to do, to make their lives uncomfortable, to them that are our inferiors? Is it lovely to do because a man will, and because a man can carry it out by the privilege, power and advantage that he hath? Whereas the rule of reason and right ought to be the law of action. Is it lovely to give way to jealousy, suspicion or evil surmising? to be ready to take all in the worst part? to make a man an offender for a word? to lie at catch, to take a man at advantage, to misinterpret a misplaced word spoken on a sudden and not considered? We are wont to say, he that speaks merrily or he that speaks suddenly, hath never an ill intention; for what is spoken merrily or suddenly, hath no teeth in it, no ill meaning in it, there is no malice in that man's words. For he that hath malice and ill-will, he weigheth his words and lies at catch. But in the freedom of converse there comes many times a word suddenly out, that the speaker would have bit in again, but it is gone. Is it lovely to be impatient, furious, to be wrathful, head-strong, admit of no pacifying terms, either from the offender or by-stander, but to be wilful and obstinate? Further, is it lovely to be disturbed, or to be dispossessed of a man's self by the casual and unavoidable accidents and contingencies of life? For a man wholly to be dispossessed of himself, if things fall out contrary to his expectation? hath this man any self-government? or hath he any such treasure in himself, that is not subject to fortune? Once more. Is it lovely to be transported with self-love, with self-admiration, with conceited reflections upon a man's own excellency

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*Whatsoever things are of good report.* 107

How is the world apostatiz'd from the divine nature, and degenerate into the devilish nature? For, commonly, our parts are employed, and our time spent, in studying and contriving defiances one against another. In the creation, God made the *second* in order to the *first*. And, if we answer the order of our creation, we should be so much the more provided for, by how many more there are in the world. It should be, one man *a God* to another: but we, thro' our degeneracy, make it to be, every man *a wolf* to another. For we see men glory in their cunning and their craft: and a cunning and crafty man, he is called a wise man: but this is no true wisdom. Thus have I given you an account of this high perfection, that falls under the notion of *lovely*.

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## DISCOURSE LXXVI.

*Whatsoever things are of good report.*

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PHIL. iv. 8.

*Whatsoever things are of good report.*

**I** Must give you an account of this, in matters of two sorts. 1. *In materia momenti*, In matter of great weight and importance. 2. *In materia levi*, in matters that are slighter and of less consideration, at least so in comparison or competition with the other. For if we come to take cognizance of things upon a moral account, and as they have place in our religion,



religion, and as they lay obligation upon conscience; there are the great things of God, the noble, generous, clear and bright truths, those things that are universally knowable, that do command belief, that are of great consequence and concernment in the life of man; which things one of the ancient fathers, *Justin Martyr*, called the *æterna jura*, the eternal rights, the immutable, indispenfible and unchangeable verities; there are *majora, insigniora jura*, the greater, the higher, more universal, famous rights, and there are also the *inferiora, minutora, leviora*, the lesser, the more particular, and obscurer rights, that are of more uncertain resolution and determination. And there is great difference between those two sorts upon a two-fold account. There is great difference in the things themselves, in respect of the matter of them. And there is vast difference also in respect of our evidence and assurance of them.

I. The former of these, they speak so much for themselves, that there needs no other testimony, no external report, no foreign determination, they are above it and they command belief and entertainment. *Loquuntur res*, the things speak themselves: and the voice and language of things is more certain and infallible, than sense of persons liable to prejudice; who may be incompetent to make report, thro' impotency or partiality: but the voice of *things* is uniform, constant, and what cannot be practised upon. Now concerning these great matters of religion and conscience, I will make these two enquiries.

*First*, What they are; of what weight and moment, and what assurance we have of them.

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*Secondly*, How they affect us, what influence they have upon us, and of what consequence they are to us.

For the *first* of these, what these great matters of religion and conscience are ; of what weight and moment, and what assurance we have of them ; I answer, that they are things of absolute rectitude and perfection : they are always the same, in all times, in all cases, in respect of all persons, in all seasons, under all dispensations, they are unalterable, unchangeable, immutable, indispensable, and of perpetual obligation ; from the creation to the shutting up of all things. They are the principles of moral action, they are the principles that God planted in the intellectual nature, in the moment of his creation. What is connatural to, what flows from the principles of reason, is of God's foundation, as well as the principles of it. Now these great truths, they are all of them inherent in human nature, they are essential to it, they are all of them founded in man's natural perfections of reason and understanding ; so that we cannot use reason but we must declare them, and make use of them, yea we are regulated by them. Now this being a thing of great weight and importance, I will give it you in several particulars, and will instance in three sorts of things, or rather things distinguished by a threefold object. 1. Some things that relate to God. 2. Things that terminate themselves in ourselves. 3. Things that have reference to others, our fellow-creatures, our neighbours.

First, Things that do refer to God ; of these I will lay you down nine particulars, which no man can

can deny. 1. If we do acknowledge that we are God's creatures, that God is our maker, our owner, and made us apprehensive of him, the original of our being; then it doth of itself follow, that we being apprehensive of him and capable, are bound to observe him, worship him and obey him. 2. If God be our governor, supreme and sovereign; then it follows, that we ought to be ruled and governed by him. 3. If God be our great benefactor, then ought we to be thankful to him, and to make worthy returns unto him. 4. If God be the perfectest of all beings, then ought we to admire, adore and reverence him. 5. If God be the first and chiefest goodness, then ought we to love and delight in him. 6. If God be most infallible, then ought we to believe him. 7. If God be most faithful, then ought we to trust him. 8. If God be the center of immortal spirits, then ought we to rest in him. 9. If God be the utmost end, then ought we finally to intend him.

Secondly, Instance in things that terminate in our selves; and I will give you four of them. 1. If we are intelligent agents, then ought we to live up to the height of reason and understanding; then we ought to subject reason to sense, not sink ourselves down into the lowness of beasts, whose full and adequate employment it is to seek for their food. If therefore thou art an intelligent agent, live up to the height of reason and understanding: let not reason be dethroned, and sense and brutish affection usurp the chair. 2. If we do consist of immortal souls and mortal bodies, then ought we to use our bodies so as they may be fit mansions to our souls; and fit tools and instru-

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ments for our souls operation ; at least so that our minds may not be annoyed and disturbed by the indisposition of our bodies, contracted by our neglect or abuse of them. 3. If we (at best) are but spirits finite and fallible, then ought modesty to be the temper and complexion of our minds. 4. If we ourselves are made, not for time only, though we pass through it first ; then ought we to subordinate all the affairs and transactions of time, to serve the interest of our souls in the state that is before us ; so to mind things temporal, that we lose not those that are eternal.

Thirdly, I instance in things that relate to our fellow-creatures. If the whole world be God's family if God charge himself with all, as well as some, if an universal providence doth extend itself to the ordering and governing every particular in the creation ; if the super-intendence of God, be to maintain all his creatures in being and welfare ; then are we all of us bound to our good behaviour. If this be true, then upon this account I infer four things. 1. That none of us ought to be wasteful or luxurious ; that so our fellow-creatures may have no want. 2. We ought not to be vexatious, boisterous and troublesome ; that so our fellow-creatures may be at ease. 3. We ought not to be rapacious or covetous ; that so our fellow-creatures may have their right. 4. We are not only to be innocent and harmless ; but we ought to be courteous, civil and kind, benevolent and gracious ; that so all others may be the better for us.

These I account the great and bright truths, the great and main things ; and I may boldly say of these  
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as the apostle speaks, *Heb. xi. 39. these have all obtained in the family of God a good report.* All men acknowledge piety, devotion towards God ; justice, righteousness amongst men ; sobriety, temperance, as every man's measure, conducive to his health, conservative of his life. And we may take *that* to be the sense of human nature, wherein all men agree. But more particularly. Who ever lived in this world, that did not prefer ingenuity and fairness before hard usage and baseness ? Who ever did not think better of constancy than giddiness ? Who ever did not value faithfulness above treachery ? Who ever did not commend charity beyond selfishness ? Who ever did not esteem modesty before impudence ? Who ever did not account humility better than pride and presumption ; sobriety better than luxury, surfeiting and drunkenness ; chastity better than wantonness ; Who ever did not prefer mercifulness before cruelty ; moderation before usurpation ; tractableness before wilfulness and stubbornness ; love and good-will before malice and envy ; speaking reverently of God before profaneness and blasphemy ? No man certainly ever had the impudence to put these things in a competition.——These things, as they are the great materials of natural light and knowledge, the main principles of conscience and the great business of religion, and are founded originally in the main foundation of God ; so they have also a superadded assurance from the revelation that is from God ; for all of them are repeated, acknowledged, yea they are farther enforced in scripture, as I have often had occasion to shew you.

*Secondly, As*

*Secondly,* As to the influence these things have upon us; we may, from what hath been said upon this head, infer; 1. These great truths give internal peace, hearts-ease and satisfaction: for in observance of these, we have certain complacence with our state and relation, and we act according to our state and capacity; so we neither do, nor suffer violence. 2. They produce in us modesty, humility, meekness, gentleness, patience, charity; and such other virtues as do sanctify by their presence and by their operation. 3. God is certainly observed in these; and in this way we truly glorify him. 4. And lastly, The presence and operation of these great principles, piety towards God, righteousness towards men, and sobriety and temperance in the government of ourselves, the presence of these in us, and the operation they have upon the hearts and lives of men, will apologize for mistakes and misapprehensions in smaller matters.

II. I now come to make some enquiry about the *minora jura*, about the lesser things, things of less consequence and concernment. In *these* the reason of the thing is less evident, and the right of the case is of more hazardous and uncertain determination; because of change, or variety of circumstances. Now in things of this nature that are mutable and changeable, here the question is, how far good report doth warrant? There are abundance of cases that I might mention under this head; but shall content myself with only mentioning a few of them.

1<sup>st</sup>. I will suppose this, and take it for granted; that no body sins, who keeps himself within the com-

pass of things materially lawful, if requisite circumstances do also concur ; I say, no man sins against God, or against his own conscience, if he do variously and differently at several times ; provided he keep himself within the compass of things that are lawful for the matter, and observe convenient and requisite circumstances.

*2dly.* Notwithstanding a man doth not sin, in doing one way one day, and otherwise another day ; one way in this case, otherwise in another ; one way in one company, another way in another : yet we are for our own security, and for the safety of others, to use a great deal of caution, moderation and prudence in the use of our liberty. *1st.* For our own security, it is good to use moderation, prudence and caution ; because he that walks on the brink of any precipice, if he should chance by any accident to trip or stumble, he falls desperately : therefore it is not safe for any man to go to the utmost of what he thinks lawful. *2dly.* For the safety of others, a man ought to use caution, moderation and prudence, in the use of external liberty ; because no man should be an occasion to another man's sin ; therefore I would not use my liberty, so as to induce another man to do that which he in respect of his judgment may not lawfully do ; and that upon a three-fold account. 1. Out of the respect a man ought to bear to God's honour, which is impeached by iniquity. 2. Out of the just regard that he hath to his brother's conscience, which is defiled by iniquity ; and the affection he hath to the safety of his brother's soul. 3. Out of that reconciled temper that is in him to the rule of  
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goodness, and the detestation that he himself deservedly bears unto sin ; which is malignity and deformity, and in itself loathsome and abominable. Now there is somewhat a different account to be given in this case, in respect of the liberty of the interior man, and the liberty of the exterior man.

In *foro interno* a man may have the liberty of his judgment, and may practise in private or secret, where it may not be convenient to act externally to the utmost of his particular private judgment : for as for the judgment of the interior man, no creature hath any cognizance at all thereof. For it is acknowledged that no foreign power doth intermeddle within any man's doors, no power hath a key to open the closet of any man's breast ; the secrets of a man knows no man, 1 Cor. ii. 11. *What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him ?* Yet notwithstanding this private judgment, a man must carefully approve himself to God and the rule of righteousness and holiness ; for it is accountable to God as much as any thing else.

But though, as to the private sentiments of a man's soul, the sense of a man's private judgment, a man is accountable to God and God only ; yet as concerning the acts of the *exterior* man, in the use of liberty as to externals ; there a man must not only consider the latitude of his own judgment, but also others. Not only the sense of one's private judgment is to be taken into consideration ; but, in the use of our liberty, a just regard is to be had to others. And in the first place, government and authority is the great appointment of God, and hath its foundation in reason,



and is necessary for the peace of communities, and maintaining of order and preserving every man's right; therefore no man must pretend liberty of his own private judgment as to externals, so as to disturb and interrupt government and authority. In the next place, you must take care of the sense of others, your equals and companions; for these may have judgment of right, and have right sentiments of things as well as you; and therefore no man must so far act upon his private judgment, as to enter into contest, so as to disparage or disturb his equals; in this we are all alike, and every body is so to compose and moderate himself, as may be most conducive to the great ends of God's honour in the world, the keeping up peace and good order, the securing and preserving universal charity, the maintaining and enlarging general love and good will; all which things are final in religion, and are to be preferred before the use of any particular man's liberty in external acts. And thus you see, though we maintain private judgment of discerning, and take it to be an inherent right of human nature to have liberty therein; yet it is so limited and confined, that there shall be no danger in it. Wherefore, the maintaining and enlarging love and good will, order, and peace, are to be preferred before the use of *externals* in particular cases. Modesty, humility, meekness, charity, and such virtues, do sanctify by their presence and operations: which cannot be affirm'd of those things which belong to the *instrumental part* of religion; as *prayer, hearing of sermons, receiving the sacraments*; all which are esteem'd from *their respect to an end*: and are then crown'd  
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*when they attain their purpose.* For scripture tells us, as to those who are immoral ; that the prayers of persons, in such circumstances, may be *abomination*. Prov. xv. 8. and xxi. 27. *Isa.* i. 11. and lxvi. 3. *Jer.* vi. 20. *Amos* v. 22. I put these things, in competition with the other : not to prejudice *these*, but to prefer *the other*. These are *the means*, the other *the end*. Our Saviour justifies this distinction between the *greater* and *lesser* rights : ——— Judgment, mercy, faith ; *the weightier matters* ; these *ought ye to have done*. ——— Tithe of mint, annise, cummin ; *these ought ye not to have left undone*, Mat. xxiii. 23.

So far as conscience may be concern'd, there is *certainty* enough in things. We may have sufficient assurance from *the reason of things* themselves, or their reference *to the end* ; from the clear report of so creditable an *instrument* as *the bible* ; from the *sense of human nature* ; from the *joint report* and *agreement* of all who have not neglected or abused their faculties ; (who are as *Euripides* says) well improved as to naturals. So that *that* hath but little or no place in religion, and is very mean and low, which is doubtful and uncertain ; which is not of unquestionable *good report*. Wherefore it argues carelessness, and neglective indifferency ; to be unresolv'd, undetermined, in matters of any weight in religion. For, we may fetch most of it out of ourselves, *Acts* xvii. 27. Awaken intellectual faculties, search, consider, examine principles of God's creation. All, but what is properly *revealed truth*, may be found out. All offices of piety, devotion towards God ; all acts of righteousness, all ways of moderation, kindness, benevolence to-

wards fellow-creatures ; subordination of sense to reason, within thyself. Wherefore it lies upon us to excel in *these great instances of morality*, gain repute and esteem in minds of men, by exact conscience in them. In these greater things we should be resolved and peremptory against the evil suggestions and provocations of a profane degenerate world : in the lesser things, where common sense *and opinion* is contrary to private ; suspend a while, for thy own sake ; forbear, for thy brother's. General *good report* is considerable ; and, by particular persons, to be weighed *in foro interno*. 'Twould make a man jealous of himself, suspicious of his own reason ; so far as to make him examine further ; enquire, and not be too peremptory. *In foro externo*, common sense, and opinion, is a very great abridgment, limitation, restriction upon our liberty. Our credit may not be enough to defend us from censure : or, on the other hand, it may be considered too much : so as to lead others to practise, without judgment of their own. We should consider also our uncertainty, fallibility, partiality, where we are affected or have a mind. So that it is safe and prudent to see also with other mens eyes. *In multitude of counsellors, is safety*, Prov. xi. 14.

'Tis a thing very desirable, to have the world be as smooth and calm, as quiet and tolerable, as may be. Offences amongst men are apt enough to arise. Where we cannot yield *internal assent*, for want of evidence, and assurance in things ; *external obedience* and compliance with sense of others, may be yielded, for the maintaining of peace, love, and good-will.

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## DISCOURSE LXXVII.

*If there be any Virtue.*

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PHIL. iv. 8.

*If there be any virtue.*

CAN any thing come after so many excellencies, after so many universals, such transcendent accomplishments ? This should seem needless : for what can be more or further. To give you an account of this, I say five things. 1. It is but an *if*, he is not positive : *if there be any virtue.* The apostle doth not say here that there is any thing beyond ; any thing distinct ; any thing further to be added to what he had said before. 2. By this form of speech he seems to intimate that he might forget ; and if he had forgotten any relation, any notion, any consideration, that might superadd any perfection or accomplishment to a christian ; if he had thought of it he would have put it in. He seems to suppose he might not think of all ; but intimates, that whatever were wanting, he would add *that* also, if it did occur ; and leaves us to supply the defect by parity of reason. 3. It is apparent that he would have a christian furnished, complete, well accomplished, as he saith to *Timothy*, *that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work.* 4. This (as  
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we are wont to say when we instance in some particular excellency, (*sic de reliquis*) extends this notion as far as the practice of reason will carry it. But, 5. And which I will abide by, he seems to have his eye upon something in particular; for really in serious thought I do not think the apostle doth speak a mere tautology or a mere supplement, but something he has his eye upon, which I shall inquire into. Therefore two things are to be done.

*First*, Enquire into the general use of this word, *virtue*.

*Secondly*, We will guess at what St. *Paul* may in particular aim at.

*First*, For the use of this word *virtue*, I say three things. 1<sup>st</sup>. In the most strict and peculiar use, it signifies warlike virtue, valour, martial courage. 2<sup>dly</sup>. In common and ordinary sense, it signifies any perfection; and so you have it in *Homer*, the *virtue of a horse*, the *virtue of a country*, that is, its fertility and fruitfulness. But, 3<sup>dly</sup>. Which is more to our purpose, you have virtue in a philosophical sense; and then virtue is opposed to all vice and wickedness; and this is also a theological sense; and although I find not this word in all the epistles of St. *Paul*, save only in this place, yet I find it twice used by St. *Peter*, 2 Pet. i. 3. *who hath called us to glory and virtue*, he puts the end before the means, to glory by virtue; and verse 5. *add to your faith, virtue*, moral accomplishments to the matters of your faith and belief. I find indeed this word *virtue* three times in the gospel, in our *English* bibles; but the word in the *Greek* should, I think, be rather translated power than virtue.

tue. *Mark v. 30. Virtue had gone out of him, i. e. power was gone out of him ; Luke vi. 19. For there went virtue out of him, and Luke viii. 46. For I perceive that virtue is gone out of me ; and these are all the places in the new testament wherein I find this word virtue. In the old testament. Ruth. iii. 11. All the city of my people do know that, &c. thou art a virtuous woman. Pro. xii. 4. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. Pro. xxxi. 10. Who can find a virtuous woman ? and verse 29. Many daughters have done virtuously.* Now this word in the *Hebrew* is of vast signification ; it signifies any excellency, any accomplishment, strength, health, wealth, right, dignity, power, &c. and the Rabinical question gives you a good account of this ; *who is a strong man ?* He is a man of valour, he that can subdue his concupiscence, his sensual faculties to his intellectual part, he is a man of valour, one that hath his senses in perfect subordination to his reason and understanding.

*Secondly,* I now come to enquire what the apostle may aim at in particular. For though he does not use the word in any of his other epistles, yet you may remember he doth insist upon all the christian graces very abundantly, and declares the fruits of the divine spirit. Now these materials are the self-same with what we call virtue. I say the graces of God conferred upon us, and the fruits of the divine spirit in us, are virtue. They are called graces, as they proceed from God ; for whatsoever we have from God, especially the more holy it is, the more it is from the grace and favour and good-will of God. This I take notice

notice of, to prevent that exception the ignorant make ; if they hear men press them to virtue and moral goodness, they think they are enemies to the grace of God ; whereas the self-same thing is the grace of God, and hath that denomination in respect of its original, God ; from whom it flows, and by whom it is conferred : and they are also called the fruits of the divine spirit in respect of the original ; but in respect of us, as they are received in the subject, so they are all virtues and moral perfections ; though there be different denominations, the subject matter is the self-same : therefore it is not an objection worth any thing, to say a man is an enemy to the grace of God or effects of the divine spirit, because he doth advance and highly recommend moral virtues and perfections.

Now I will give you an account of this in three particulars ; and will come to guess at St. *Paul's* meaning ; for I do not think it an unnecessary super-addition or empty repetition, but that he may mean one of these three things.

*1<sup>st</sup>.* Virtue is explicable in the skill of the several mysteries : either in the first place, of the arts and sciences ; or in the second place, of the tongues and languages ; or thirdly, of the several trades and professions ; in the use of gifts, whether *ordinary*, and acquired by our own industry and study ; or *extraordinary*. For there are sundry things in which human nature may be brought to some kind of perfection, in which it may be well employed ; and in these our apostle would have men to furnish and accomplish themselves, to render themselves useful and consider-

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able according to their several opportunities. He would not have a christian idle, he would not have him wanting in any thing, he would have him employ his faculties. A man should not be idle ; for he hath still something to do ; for knowledge is no man's burden ; and in all arts and sciences, in tongues and languages, in trades and professions, the man that is a christian, and the more he is skilled in any of them, the more fit he is to do service for publick advantage, 1 *Cor.* xii. 1. and 1 *Cor.* xiv. The apostle therefore would not have christians wanting in any thing ; or think any piece of morality below them, be it as low as merely civility, affability, courtesy.

2dly. He may, and very probably hath, his eye upon that famous distinction of the virtues by the philosophers, who tell us, in their catalogue of virtues, of five intellectual virtues and eleven moral virtues, tending to accomplish a man's mind and understanding, and to govern man's will and appetite, and appear in a man's life. And this distinction of virtue was famous in the world before the time of the apostle. The five intellectual virtues, such as accomplish the understandings of men, are. 1. Science, whereby men know conclusions by their principles. 2. Intelligence, whereby men improve the principles connatural to human nature. 3. Prudence, whereby men know how to order the *various* contingent affairs of life. 4. Sapience, whereby men comprehend at once both subsequent and consequent, principle and conclusion ; arts both liberal and mechanical, whereby men are accomplished for all the affairs of life. 5.—Then there are the eleven moral virtues that do govern mens wills



wills and appetites ; and exert themselves in several and various points and cases of life, wherewithal a man is to accomplish himself. As 1. In case of fear and danger, to which the life of man is liable and obnoxious ; let him have fortitude, courage and valour ; let him stand his ground. 2. As he is concerned in bargaining with others, or distributing rewards and punishments ; let him have justice and equity ; let him have his rule in his mind, that he may know how to distribute rewards and punishments, and how to observe the rules of justice and equity in all commutations and bargains. 3. As he is concerned in meats and drinks and other delights ; let him have temperance, moderation and chastity. 4. As he is concerned in wealth and worldly estate ; so let him acquaint himself with noble principles of liberality and magnificence. Liberality, that holds a proportion to his income and revenue ; and magnificence, that shews the greatness and nobleness of his mind, whereby he is disposed to do great things, if his worldly estate were competent and in his power. 5. In case of honour, applause and esteem, let him have magnanimity and modesty ; magnanimity, whereby he is above his honour ; and modesty, if more be conferred upon him than of due does belong to him. 6. In his conversation with others ; let him have gentleness and civility. 7. In speech and conference ; affability, veracity and taciturnity. 8. — 9. — 10. — 11. — Now in these things did the better sort of men, that lived without the pale of the church, exercise themselves ; and by these they did accomplish themselves ; and in the use of these, they

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were profitable and useful to others. This seems to me to be no improbable guess : but if these two do not satisfy, I am sure the third will. Therefore

3dly. In the third place. The apostle might consider the peculiarity of several persons. There is that which is peculiar to each sex : the proper excellency of one sex, is modesty and loving affection ; the proper excellence of the other sex, is judgment of the reason of things, courage, and resolution. This is to be observed, and it is remarkable in persons that live among us, that besides the general principles of integrity and good conscience, their general goodness and uprightness, whereby they are recommended to men, and valuable in the sight of God ; some have a peculiar way of conversation, and are singularly good and useful for several special purposes, wherein others are short ; and this is evident in practice. I will instance in eight particulars ; as, 1. There are some that are exceeding good at putting off an abuse by innocent wit and parts, and so prevent a world of mischief ; that is, all quarelling, differences, and fallings out, and mens running to their swords. It is an observation of an ingenious gentleman, that duels and quarrels are occasioned for want of wit : and I account him a gallant person, who upon serious consideration said ; ‘ I pray God, that if I have not a friend in the world to tell me of my faults, that he would raise me up an enemy to do it.’ 2. Some are very dextrous to put a man out of a fit of passion without speaking an untruth, or doing any hurt to the person that was the cause of the provocation. An instance of this you have in that excellent person,

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*Abigail* ; who when *David* was in a rage and passion, she met him in the way, and treats him so handsomely, that by her good carriage she reduced *David* to a good temper, and saved her husband's estate and life : hereby a double good office was performed ; the passionate man was restored to himself, and the person that was in danger secured, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 3. Some are excellent good, and very happy in frustrating and defeating ill counsel ; and by so doing, prevent a great deal of danger and mischief. An instance of this you have in *Hushai*, who did frustrate the counsel of *Ahitophel*. It was called the good counsel of *Ahitophel*, not that it was good in itself ; but good to the purpose it was designed for. And this he doth by ingenious pretences and plausible suggestions, so that *Abfalom* discovered it not, 2 *Sam.* xvii. 4 Some can handsomely prevent a mistake, into which they see some men ready to run in conversation ; having wit at hand, for better construction than the person concerned was ready to make. And this is admirable good service : for we have a sort of men, if ever they happen upon a wrong construction, all the world cannot remove them ; and it is admirable service to keep these men right at first. In this case it is easier a great deal to prevent than to recover. 5. Some are admirable good peace-makers, excellent arbitrators, good referees, ingenious in finding out tempers and terms of accommodation ; and this is a blessed work. Thus the woman of *Abel* did, and thereby preserved herself, and stopped *Joab* from destroying the city, 2 *Sam.* xx. 16. 6. Some are excellent good company ; that is, they can make harmless, innocent

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nocent and inoffensive mirth, to relieve and recreate the drooping depressed spirits of others. This I make account is beyond *Solomon's strong drink*: *give strong drink to him that is ready to perish*, Pro. xxxi. 6. this is beyond the wines St. Paul advises *Timothy* to take for his health's sake and his often infirmities, 1 Tim. v. 23. for if you relieve the spirits, you recover the body. 7. Some can handsomely fetch a man off, when he is engaged and over-matched; so that he may better consider, he may know his own inches; and so not be so forward to enter the lists again, because he knows the strength of his own argument. 8. and lastly, Some can help a man at a dead lift, as we say; and find out, when others are at a dead loss: we have many of these excellencies scattered among men; and these are worthy superadditions to the great materials of nobleness and virtue. ————— *These* are good effects of nimbleness of wit, and quickness of apprehension; which are oft found to prevent mischief.

*These* several distinct excellencies, and perfections, are the ornaments and endowments of human nature; and not *all* usually meeting in the same person: but divided, and dispersed, amongst men. *They* are so many *rays* and *beams* of the infiniteness of the divine knowledge and wisdom; the flourishes of God's liberal and bountiful creation. *These* also recommend us one to another, as needing each other in several ways, and to different purposes. For, by a joint contribution of our several divided perfections, we make *one body complete*. Whereas an *absoluteness* and *self-sufficiency* is not found in any particular.

Now



Now because perhaps you may say, I have fed you with an imaginary piece of divinity, and that I have made you a cob-web spun out of a man's own brain, I will give you some instances out of scripture to confirm what I have said. 1. This was *Joseph's* politick advice to gain the land of *Goshen* for his father, *Gen. xli. 34.* He doth instruct them to say they were shepherds. *Ye shall say, thy servants trade hath been about cattle from our youth, even untill now, both we and also our fathers; that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen. For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.* 2. Another instance was that of the midwives, *Exod. i. 19.* And the midwives said unto *Pharaoh* (their apology to save the *Israelitish* children), *because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.* We have no reason to disbelieve what they said, but that it might be true; but it shewed the readiness of their wit when they were under so severe a threatening; and we have no reason to blame them for it; because 'tis said, *ver. 20.* Therefore God dealt well with the midwives. 3. Another instance was *Saul's* reservation from his uncle, *1 Sam. x. 15; 16.* And *Saul* said unto his uncle, he told us plainly that the asses were found: but of the matter of the kingdom whereof *Samuel* spake, he told him not a word. 4. The next instance is, *1 Sam. xvi.* *Samuel*, when he was to go to anoint *David* king; he pretends sacrifice: it was true; but it was not all. 5. The next instance is, *1 Sam. xx. 28.* *Jonathan's* contrivance for an excuse for *David's* absence to put *Saul* off, who intended him mischief; and see how *Jonathan* reserves it from

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from the lad, by shooting arrows short, or farther.

6. In the next place I alledge *Jeremiah's* reservation of what passed between king *Zedekiah* and himself.

*So they left off speaking with him, for the matter was not perceived by the princes,* Jer. xxviii. 27. He told them part; but did not tell them all. 7. I will give you two instances of *St. Paul*. First, his avoiding the offence of the *Jews*, who were zealous for the law, by complying with the apostle's advice in having his head shaven, *Acts* xxi. 23. that is, in external modes and circumstances, though contrary to his settled judgment and opinion, which he reserved from them at that time. Then, his prudence for his own security, by dashing party against party; *Acts* xxiii.

6. *But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council,*

*men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.* But if any one will question any of these instances, I will produce you the practise of our blessed Lord and Saviour himself. For he puts of curiously the captious questions, sometimes by asking convictive and awakening questions, otherwhile by treating of other matters. 1. By putting off captious questions, by asking convictive and awakening questions; as when they ask him, *Mat.* xxi. 23. *By what authority doest thou these things?* He answers them, by asking another question, in ver. 24. *I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?* So that other captious and dangerous question

about paying tribute to *Cæsar*, *Mat. xxii. 17.* Tell us therefore what thou thinkest ; is it lawful to give tribute to *Cæsar*, or not ? For the *Jews* thought they were the free people of God, and therefore ought not to be in bondage to *Cæsar*, ver. 18. But *Jesus* perceived their wickedness, and said, why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites ? shew me the tribute money, &c. And then, 2dly, Sometime diverting unprofitable questions, and taking occasion to treat of matters that tend to edification ; as when they come and ask him, *Mat. xxii. 24, 25.* of seven brethren that had one woman to wife, whose she should be in the resurrection ; he leaves the question, whose wife she should be, and comes downright to discourse of the resurrection, and gives great proof that *God was the God of the living, and not of the dead.* Again, *Luke xiii. 23.* Then said one to him, Lord, are there few that be saved ? Our Saviour takes no notice of that question but takes the advantage upon it, and bids them strive to enter in at the strait gate. Now of such like cases as these are, doth *Solomon* speak in these places, *Prov. xi. 13.* A tale-bearer revealeth secrets ; but he that is of a faithful spirit, concealeth the matter. *Prov. xvi. 20.* He that handleth a matter wisely, shall find good ; that represents it with advantage, that tells no more than is requisite and fit, and for the purpose. *Prov. xvii. 9.* He that repeateth a matter, separateth very friends. *Prov. xviii. 13.* He that answereth a matter before he beareth it, it is folly and shame to him. *Prov. xxv. 2.* On the contrary ; it is the glory of God to conceal a thing ; but the honour of the king is to search out the matter.

Thus

*If there be any praise.*

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Thus I think I have given you, if not a certain, yet a very rational and probable account of this super-addition ; *if there be any virtue.* To conclude then ; what is useful, graceful, beneficial, though we cannot say it falls under any particular command, it is here recommended to us under the notion of *virtue.* It is enough that it is to the purpose of the end ; for that is the measure the apostle goes by, for the building up of the end. *Eph. iv. 25.* I follow the *Greek* rather than the translation. Speech is not only given to men for spiritual effects and purposes, but for others too ; and the end of speech and conversation, is sufficiently secured by the relation it hath to the end. Thus have I given you an account of this super-addition ; *if there be any virtue.*

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## DISCOURSE LXXVIII.

*If there be any praise.*

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PHIL. iv. 8.

*If there be any praise.*

**H**ERE two things I conceive are to be done, to give you an account of these words.

First, The reason of this addition to what was before.

Secondly, An account how far valuable.

1. The reason of this addition to what was before. Not that the apostle would have any of us to be vain-

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glorious;



glorious, to affect the commendation of others, or their praise ; but that we do what is truly praiseworthy. Affectation of praise, is not perfection, but the effect of impotency of mind ; for every body should know his own measure and bounds ; every man should consider how short his internal endowments are ; they are only fools, that are self-conceited and presumptuous ; all wise men are sober and modest, and conceive of themselves according to the measure of reason ; and are more sensible of their failings, shortness and imperfection, than they are possessors of their opinion of self-sufficiency. Ignorance and folly are the only things that puff men up and fill them with fond self-conceit. But a wise man doth think with himself, that the most of that he doth know, is the least of that which is to be known : and that of the poet, *thou art to thyself a whole world*, and *thou art a fool, if thou seek thyself abroad* : and the direction of wisdom, *dwell with thyself*.

2. And to speak to the argument ; praise how far valuable, how far useful, what advantage a wise man may make of it.

Praise naturally and regularly follows upon virtue, if truly so ; and is a note of virtue, a piece of the reward thereof. But two things here I must say, *1st*. To be praised by a man who is not capable to make a report, is not commendation, but a slander and disparagement : for a philosopher could say, when the generality of men commended him, *what evil have I done, that I am commended by such incapable persons ?* *2dly*. To be applauded for bad actions, it is no praise but flattery ; and it is the report of brethren in iniquity,

quity, as the *Psalmist* expresseth it, *Psal lxiv. 5. They encourage themselves in an evil matter.* Therefore to praise, two things are necessary; *1st.* The competency of him that gives the testimony; and, *2dly.* The desert of the cause of the person who is well reported of. Let virtue therefore go before, and praise follow after, as the shadow doth the body. It hath true place, when it doth accompany worthy actions; and the right use is, when it is a further incentive and a spur to virtue. It is true which we say, virtue is in our own power, but praise is not; praise and honour is in the power of him that gives it: it is his to bestow it, and it is his to take it away: but this is for certain; honour and praise is due to virtue; and whether a man hath it or no, it comes all to one, for it is his due. Our Saviour tells us, *blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, Matt. v. 11.* Truth is great: it may be oppressed a while; but will at last prevail.

But praise takes much with men; it is an advantage to goodness, and a provocation to worthiness; men love to be well thought of, and well spoken of, while living and when dead; which some make an argument of an innate sense of our immortality: for if we were extinct after we are dead, what matter is it whether we are well or ill spoken of? And the rule is, *loquere de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, speak nothing of the dead but what is good; and that not only because they are not present to make their defence, but because sooner or latter it will be every man's own condition. And I observe that any man that is a fo-

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ber and a wise man, if he hath occasion to speak any thing of a dead man that doth reflect, he doth it with an apology, to shew that it is not a thing beſeeming in itſelf, nor pleaſing to him.

He that is praiſed for ſomething worthy, for ſomething that is uſeful or taking with men : hath acceptance, is attended upon with expectation, and he may make great advantage of it ; and if he be not bitten with the teeth of envy, he ſhall be mightily credited, and ſpeak, and do, with great advantage. Whereas if he be not regarded, nor conſidered, he will have no opportunity to do men good : and where men are foreſtalled, prepoſſeſs'd, prejudiced, a man loſes his labour with them. Wherefore praiſe is a thing not to be neglected or deſpiſed ; and therefore men do very well to ſtand upon their credit, both for their own ſakes and for the ſake of others ; for their own ſake, as their better ſecurity in virtue ; for others, as it gives them an advantage to do other men good. Further, it is the great obſervation of wiſe men, that whoſoever deſpiſes ſhame, deſpiſeth ſin ; he cares not what he doth ; will do any thing, be it right or wrong. It is a very great check and a ſharp reproof, a pungent argument, when we ſay, are you not aſhamed ? It repreſents a horrid ſtate, *Jer. viii. 12. They were not aſhamed, neither did they bluſh.* Upon this account it is preſervative, ſovereign, and very conducive to the ſafety of perſons in a virtuous way, to their credit and eſteem, that men of place and worth, either declare a good opinion ; or, at leaſt, good hopes and expectations of thoſe within their government. This is that which engages men to do worthily, that perſons

sons of worthy and competent judgment, persons of power, may have a good opinion of them ; but he from whom nothing is expected, hath only this single security, the integrity of his own conscience. In the next place ; it tends to engage and encourage to proficiency in virtue ; whereas when men have lost their credit, they grow desperate. Wherefore it is a great, an irreparable evil, and the greatest wrong that can be, to blast a man's reputation, to take away his good name ; this is easily done, but 'tis not in a man's power to repair it. Therefore it is a point of great righteousness, and ought to be of conscience, to take care to preserve one another's good name. 'Tis to take away his *second* security to goodness, as conscience is his *first*.

On the other side, when men are incompetent to judge, through their insufficiency ; or are engaged in an evil way ; then it doth not lie upon us to get their testimony ; but all that then we can do, is to approve ourselves to their consciences ; not their humours, wills, pleasures. And I am very confident that many persons that have not the mouths and tongues of persons at command, yet command in their consciences, and in their inward sense are justified. Thus was our Saviour justified ; *for wisdom is justified of her children*. But where men judge according to the rule of right ; their sense is considerable ; and their commendation valuable.

Therefore this I resolve : commendation, therefore is of use, both to encourage good behaviour ; and further settle the well-resolved. And he who hath the advantage of repute, and credit, may more easily persuade

suade to ways of goodness, and sobriety. Wherefore if the good esteem of others can be gained upon terms of truth and righteousness, it is a worthy purchase ; for it tends to a man's security and settlement in ways of goodness and virtue ; and doth enable us to deal powerfully with others for their good.

Now having in some measure shewed you the value of a just esteem for virtue ; I will in short tell you, that the affectation of popularity is quite another thing, and it doth only belong to poor spirits, and impotent souls ; nothing more vain, nothing less sincere, nothing worse grounded, nothing that a man can worse lay hold upon, than that we call popular air ; and that upon three accounts. 1<sup>st</sup>, It is moveable. The wind doth not change so often as the giddy multitude. 2<sup>dly</sup>, The vulgar do not distinguish they are not able to make a difference and distinction. 3<sup>dly</sup>, The foundation of it is not solid, but mere fancy and imagination. — Thus have I given you a short account of this supper-addition ; *if there be any praise.*

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## DISCOURSE LXXIX.

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*Think on these things.*

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PHIL. iv. 8.

*Think on these things.*

**I** Have treated (as you know) of the several perfections and accomplishments that are charged upon us here by the apostle upon account of religion, and have given you an account what those things are that the apostle doth recommend, as the necessary qualifications and due endowments of a christian spirit. In the first place we had, *whatsoever things are true*. Religion requires simplicity, ingenuity, sincerity, integrity, uprightness in our profession. 2. *Whatsoever things are grave, venerable, seemly, comely, honourable*, unto the person. Religion requires good behaviour, fair deportment of ourselves, such demeanour and carriage as may gain reverence and esteem, and bear off all contempt and disrespect. 3. *Whatsoever things are just or equal*. Religion holds us to rules of right: and if equity require that which is better and exceeds right, we are to do the thing that is equal, to consider all compassionate cases as God does, to make allowance as far as reason may require. 4. *Whatsoever things are pure and holy*. A person of religion, is truly devout; affected towards God, and the things wherein he may observe him and shew his regard



regard towards him : he is no trifler nor dallier with God, nor a profaner of holy things. 5. *Whatsoever things are lovely.* A person of religion, is for the nobler and worthier part, in all competition of things and actions. 6. *Whatsoever things are of good report.* A person of religion, approves himself to all rules and laws of reason and of righteousness; is irreprovable in the judgment of sober and impartial men. 7. *If there be any virtue.* Whatsoever virtue there is, in account, or esteem, amongst men ; a person of religion is prepared to all good offices, he is for all good purposes, he is a person exercised in all the several virtues and accomplishments of human nature ; he is baptised into, and sanctified by the virtues, as the moralist speaks. 8. And lastly, *If there be any praise.* A person of religion employs himself in things that are commendable and praise-worthy. Of all these I have given you some account.

And now here, upon the whole matter he doth enjoin them all together by super-adding these words, *think on these things.* The *English* translation abates of the emphasis that is in the *Greek* ; for if you read them according to the *Greek*, it is, *in the use of your reason, mind, and understanding, think these things to be reasonable ; in the exercise of your natural faculties, charge yourself with these things.* It is not barely, *have them in your thoughts* ; but, *in the use of your reason, recommend all these things to yourself.* Think that you do not acquit yourself ; that you do not that that becomes you ; that you do not raise a connatural superstructure to the foundation of nature ; if you do not, in the reason of your mind, think all these things  
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worthy of you. Use your own faculties ; use mind and understanding, and you will be satisfied that all these things are worthy of you, and becoming you, they will be suitable to your reason. This is the sense of the words.

A person of religion is, first, all this in his judgment and internal sense.

2dly, He is all this in his temper, and the disposition of his mind, the settled complexion and constitution of his soul.

3dly, He is so in his life and practice, and in his whole conversation with men ; he is not only so now and then, and as we say, by fits and starts, on occasion, when he is specially engaged ; but the very reason of his mind is reconciled to the rule and measure of things and actions.

Now this is that which I am to recommend to you, not only that these things should have an obligation upon you at sometimes, (for that is but dull), but that you should be reconciled to all these things in the reason of your minds, that these things should become natural to you, a frame and temper, a complexion and constitution of soul. Apply to these things the reason of your own minds, and you cannot but be convinced of the reasonableness of them ; for the materials of religion do exercise, teach, and satisfy.

Religion exercises, teaches, satisfies that which is the height and excellency of human nature. Our reason is not laid aside nor discharged, much less is it confounded by any of the materials of religion ; but awakened, excited, employed, directed, and improved

proved by it : for the mind and understanding of man, is that faculty, whereby man is made capable of God, and apprehensive of him, receptive from him, and able to make returns upon him, and acknowledgments to him. Bring that with you, or else you are not capable receivers : unless you drink in these moral principles ; unless you do receive them by reason, the reason of things by the reason of your mind, your religion is but shallow and superficial. For this you are to understand, that man is a compound of different things, hath several sorts of faculties, above any creature in this visible world. He hath an immortal spirit, as well as a bodily substance : and though the spirit of man in this state be joined to a body, and made a member of this material visible world, yet itself doth belong to another country. I say, a man is a compound of different and several things ; he hath several sorts of faculties, which we are wont in our philosophy to call his upper and his lower powers ; and by these he doth converse with things of a very different order. By the higher powers, he is able to converse both with God and things spiritual and celestial ; and by the lower powers, with terrene and earthly. As to instance : by mind, and understanding, and will, he hath intercouse and communion with God, and things invisible ; and by these he is fitted to the improving all the lower objects to heavenly ends and purposes. But then, by sense, imagination and brutish affection, we can only maintain acquaintance with this outward and lower world. But by this principle of reason and understanding, we are made capable of religion. So that man's peculiar object and proper

proper business, is in things of the mind ; and therefore he ought to use those high faculties of his soul, to enquire after God, and find out truth, and the reason of things ; and consequently after such enquiry, to determine himself, in his resolution and choice, to things according to their intrinsic worth and value.

Two things here I say. 1<sup>st</sup>, No man is born to be idle in the world : for tho' it is the privilege of some particular persons, that they who were born before them have provided for all comforts, necessities, and conveniencies of life ; so that they have enough to enjoy, with a superfluity and abundance : yet this I will say of all men, and indifferently of all our ancestors, that though they might acquire inheritances and worldly conveniencies, yet they could not acquire for, or leave to any of us, mental endowments, no habitual dispositions : but in respect of these 'tis true, that every body is master of his own fortune under God ; every man hath himself, as he useth himself. He that by motion upwards contemplates God, converses with things spiritual and immaterial, he doth fit himself more for attendance upon God, and converses with angels and separate souls ; but he that through brutishness and sensuality sinks into this lower world, and lives to grow less, he will finally shrivel up and come to nothing. Now here is that which I recommend to you all ; work for the mind ; and this is that which is most peculiar and proper to human nature. No one is born to this, more than another : but if you will be intellectually improved, if you will be refined in your spirits, refined in your morals ; if you will be more than the *vulgus hominum*,  
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you must set yourselves in the ways of reading, meditation and conference, and self-reflection, and awaken your intellectuals ; or else you shall come to nothing.

2. That which in the second place I super-add, is this : that the first operation in religion, is mental and intellectual, (*viz* ) consideration, discussion, examination, self-reflection, approving the reason of things to the reason of our minds as the proper rule. This is a notion worthy of your consideration. In all things of weight, in the great points of conscience, in the great materials of religion, there is a reason in the things, that doth enforce them, and enjoin them upon us, and require them of us. As, if I be God's creature, stand in relation to him, am capable of him ; I am naturally and unavoidably under an obligation of duty and affection to him ; and I am bound to serve him, honour, and live in regard of him. Here is the reason of the thing ; and the reason of your mind is to find it out ; which a beast cannot do ; therefore is incapable of religion. But this is that which you are to do ; and there is no religion but in this. I say, if so be a man doth not admit what he receives, with satisfaction to the reason of his mind ; he doth not receive it as an intelligent agent, but he receives it as a vessel receives water ; he is *continens* rather than *recipiens*. But this is the peculiarity of human nature, that through the reason of his mind he may come to understand the reason of things : and this is that you are to do ; and there is no coming to religion but this way. Wherefore they begin at the wrong end, who do not set themselves

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at first thus to work ; and so are not at all likely to hold out, or go on ; or if they do continue to retain a certain mode or way of religion, they are not likely to bring any thing in religion to perfection ; for the mind's satisfaction and resolution is the first and principal : and if we leap over this, and jump into a profession of religion without this consideration, discussion, examination, self-reflection, and approving the reason of our minds to the reason of things as the proper rule : we shall be ever lame in our way, and slight in our business. We shall not build upon a rock ; we shall not lay a solid foundation. Our Saviour therefore bids us, before we engage to build a tower, to sit down, consider, and recount whether we shall be able to finish it, *Luke. xiv. 26. to the 32.* For, assure yourselves, whatsoever is rashly begun, it undoubtedly goes on, and foolishly deceives, either in religion or any thing else.

Of all impotencies in the world, credulity in religion is the greatest. This *Solomon* hath observed, that simple, weak, shallow heads are foolish, and believe that which any one saith ; sail with every wind that blows. *Prov. xiv. 15. The simple believeth every word ; but the prudent man looketh well about him.* When a man hath made a deliberate act of judgment in a case, upon consideration of reason, grounds and principles ; he hath always ever after within him, whereby to encourage him to go on, and answer all objections as they shall arise. Whereas he that begins not thus ; upon all contrary appearances, he will be unsettled and unstable in all his ways : but the person of examination and consideration, that begins

gins upon discussion, &c. and so comes to well-grounded resolution ; he is encouraged from the memory of the motives that made him begin, the motives that set him at work ; and the prospect of the end at which he did aim, and which he did design, and which he hath also constantly in his eye. But he that begins inconsiderately, he is so weak in his way, that there is little expectation of his holding out. And truly this is a just account of all the shameful and horrid apostacy of all formal professors ; they did never weigh and examine, they did never reconcile their religion to the reason of their minds ; so that really they have but an external denomination from their profession.

Man is not at all settled or confirmed in his religion, until his religion is the self-same with the reason of his mind ; that when he thinks he speaks reason, he speaks religion ; or when he speaks religiously, he speaks reasonably ; and his religion and reason is mingled together ; they pass into one principle ; they are no more two, but one : just as the light in the air makes one illuminated sphere ; so reason and religion in the subject, are one principle.

To hold this forth more fully, I will lay it out in four propositions,

*First*, It is lowness and imperfection in religion, to drudge in it, and every man drudges in religion, that takes up religion as a task, carries it as a burden ; and doth it, as a task, barely to satisfy conscience, that conscience may not trouble, vex, condemn ; doth it, because he must do it, or because his superiors require it of him, or because time, and place, and cus-

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tom calls for it ; because the day requires it, or because it is such an hour, because he is now up, or because he must now go to bed. If this be the best motive a man hath, his religion is but a burden. But they who are come to any growth in religion, are free-spirited in it, and do it with inward satisfaction, pleasure and content : they harmonize with it, they understand it is in itself best, and fit so to do ; and that it is also good in itself, and good for them ; worthy in respect of God, and becoming them in the relation they stand in to him ; tends to their perfection, and will bring them to happiness. A man hath this at least by his religion, that if by accident he admits of sin, he never does it with pleasure : he doth not, like the ox, drink iniquity like water, as *Eliphaz* elegantly expresses it : but this is his temper, and he hath *Joseph's* resolution, *how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God ?* I say again, he hath this advantage by his religion, that if by temptation, by surprize, or violent assault, he happens to admit any evil, he doth it with displacency, he offends himself as well as God : and he hath a principle within him of self-recovery, viz. that which *St. Paul* speaks of, *Rom. vii. 23. The law of his mind,* so that, as water, if it chance to be sullied, hath in it a principle to work the dregs to the bottom ; so will this man by repentance and ingenuity recover himself to his innocency : and this is that which our Saviour means by *pure in heart* ; and in this he hath a convinced, satisfied judgment, because he hath an internal principle. The reason of his mind is taught and illuminated ; he is in this condemned in his own con-



science, and he will hasten to make his peace with himself as well as with God. And indeed I tell you by the way, it is a harder matter for a truly good man, of honest principles, to forgive himself, than to obtain forgiveness of God ; though I make no question but that God, according to his promise, doth presently forgive every true penitent, if he go to God according to his direction. I say in this case, he is condemned of himself, and therefore he will hasten to set all things right and straight within himself, and be at peace with his own mind ; and that is by revocation of what was done amiss ; by deprecating God's displeasure, by asking God forgiveness, by crying him mercy, by double diligence and watchfulness and resolution never to do the like again.

*Secondly*, The seat of religion is the inward man ; it is first the sense of a man's soul, the temper of his mind, the *pulse* of his heart. You have always in intellectual nature, the elicit acts, as we call them ; that is, mental and internal acts ; and they always precede and go before imperate *acts*, that is, external acts. The elicit acts of the mind, they are first. It lies first *within the mind* ; after that, it doth appear externally, in speeches, gestures, actions, and the effects of all good self-government.

In rational and in all intellectual nature, you have first that which we call the speech of a man's mind with itself ; the mind doth parley with itself, debates the thing throughly ; then you have the overt-acts, and afterwards you have the mind's sense put into language. This is the way of operation in intellectual natures, to speak with ourselves before we speak with

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with others ; and it doth not become us to make too much haste with the latter, before the former be over ; it is just as *Solomon* hath observed it, *Eccl. x. 14. The fool is full of words, but the wise man is not so ;* at least he thinks before he speaks.

My *third* proposition is this, that in the state of religion, spirituals and naturals join and mingle in their subjects ; so that if a man be once in a true state of religion, he cannot distinguish between religion and the reason of his mind ; so that his religion is the reason of his mind, and the reason of his mind is his religion. They are not two things now ; they do not go two several ways, but concur and agree ; they both run into one principle, they make one spirit, make one stream. The effects and products of his reason and religion are the same, in a person that is truly religious ; his reason is sanctified by his religion, and his religion helps and makes use of his reason : so that in the subject it is but one thing ; you may call it, if you will, religious reason, and reason made religious ; they are not divided or separated ; but the union is more intimate and near, as these principles are more immaterial and spiritual ; whereas gross and material things keep at a distance, because of the impossibility of *penetration*.

*Fourthly* and lastly. Religion doth us great service, great pleasure and courtesy, both for mind and body.

1. For our mind, immediately by its formal presence and residence.

2. For our body, by the good consequences that follow upon the mind's good government.

In particular. Your religion is the mind's health and good temper, and it doth help to conserve the body's strength : as for instance, sobriety, gentleness, temperance, meekness, modesty, humility, which are the materials of religion ; all these do spare and favour the body : on the contrary, pride, arrogance, haughtiness, presumption, fierceness, intemperance, which are things contrary to religion, these waste and spoil the body. Also faith and affiance in God, love of God, goodness and complacence with God, harmony with him, delight in him ; these do maintain and keep up mens spirits ; and you know mens spirits do strongly resist all manner of disease : on the contrary, mal-content, distrust, despair, diffidence, founess, peevishness, wrathfulness, anger, displeasure ; these do hurt our minds, spoil all our mettle, and abate our courage. Wherefore you see God hath given us religion altogether for our advantage, not only for the future estate, but also for the present : the soul's safety, the body's better security.

To go on further : how doth malice, envy, and purpose of revenge, prey upon the body, spend mens spirits ? whereas they who live in love and good-will, are of gentle and quiet spirits, they favour their bodies ; the body is wasted under the former, but bodily strength is maintained under these. *Psal. lv. 23. The bloody and deceitful men do not live out half their days.* And it is observed by Solomon, Prov. iii. 13. *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom : wisdom is religion in his sense.* And ver. 16, *length of days are in her right-hand, and in her left-hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

*peace.* Farther : in ways of temperance there is health, strength, and long life : whereas the licentious and exorbitant livers, they do load themselves with distempers, and often die before the time. Wherefore Solomon advises, *Eccl. vii. 17. Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish ; why shouldest thou die before thy time ?* Wherefore you see religion is good for the purposes of this life, as well as for the state of eternity.

I hasten now to a conclusion, and will conclude with a double exhortation.

*1st.* If you love yourselves, either bodies or souls, acquaint your selves with religion.

*2dly.* If you would be religious, be intelligent and rational in your religion ; or else your religion may be only a denomination, and not sovereign to you.

*1st.* If you love yourselves, either in respect of the present or future state, acquaint yourselves with religion.

*2dly.* If you meddle with religion, be intelligent and rational in your religion ; study religion till the reason of your minds receive satisfaction ; for till then you cannot account it your own, neither call it your own ; neither hath it security and settlement in its subject. And till this be, men will not be friendly to their religion, they will not make it their adoption or choice ; but rather look upon it as their exactor, their tormentor, the controuler of their liberty and will ; and look upon God as an *Egyptian* task-master ; they will carry it as their burden, which a man will throw off as soon as he hath opportunity.



Now I dare undertake to shew, that all true reason is for religion, and nothing of truth against it; and this I will shew thus. There are but two things that are sincere and solid, real and substantial in the world, *the reason of the thing*, for the rule; and *the reason of the subject*, for the discerning faculty. Now the *reason of the thing*, that is certainly for religion; and the reason of the thing is as infallible a rule, and as certain as the law of heaven. For the reason of the thing, if it be in institutes, it is according to the revelation of the divine will; and if it be in necessities, it is according to the nature of God himself. In things depending upon will and pleasure revealed from God, it is according to the divine will, in things that are in themselves necessary, it is according to the nature of God. Therefore the reason of the thing, that is certainly for religion. Now the *reason of the subject*, either it is blind or biased, prepossessed or corrupted, if it be against it; that for certain. Now if it be so, here is our great challenge; the reason of the thing, that is made to our hand; the use of our faculties, that is to find it out. The reason of the thing, it is a rule to the reason of the subject; if it varies, it is to be rectified, corrected by the rule. The reason of the thing is always for religion, if the reason of the subject is to comply with the rule then a man's reason and his religion will accord and meet. If we be in the true use of reason, we may see cause for what we do in the way of religion; but if we be ignorant, we are neither rational nor religious. Where a man hath not weighed and considered, searched and examined, he is no body. If he be rational

rational, then he discerns the reason of the thing ; and the reason of the thing, if he comply with it, is religion. Blind presumption and suspicion, are very sorry things, and have no place any where ; for prepossession and anticipation shew men to be of a party, but no true discerners of truth.

In the close of all, let me advise you to clear understanding, true perception, and right apprehensions of things, that you charge yourselves with, upon account of religion : I would never advise a man to be light of faith in matters of religion, or to run away with suppositions, or dully to refer himself or compromise with any party ; but so far as he thinks religion concerns him, let him take to himself leisure and opportunity ; let him weigh and consider, and let him use his faculties, as he may do : this is the direction in religion ; use your reason so far as you may have perception of these things, and such a sensation of them that you may receive satisfaction. If you do not do so, really you do not come within the compass of religion. A man may admit that which is a true principle upon account of religion, yet because he doth not receive it upon account of its own evidence, light and truth, he doth not entertain that of religion, as a point of religion ; but he believes it as he believes a story that he hears a man tell, but never considers it whether it be true or false. Religion is not a thing that can be made up of ignorant well-meanings, or of fond or slight imaginations, credulous suspicion, or fond conceit ; such are the suppositions of all superstition ; but of deliberate resolutions, and diligent searches into the reason of things, and into the rational sense of holy scripture. We

We have cause to give God thanks, that so far as revelation is necessary to convey any thing by way of superaddition to the light of God's creation ; to the principles whereof, God made us in the moment of his creation ; God hath not left us to vain supposition, nor to the ungrounded guesses of fond minds ; but you have it clearly, plainly, fully, satisfactorily laid down in holy scripture ; so that religion is the clearest and most self-evident thing in the world ; but if a man do not enquire into the reason and grounds of his persuasion ; if he gives himself up to drudge in the world, and refer himself in his religion to other men's sense, delivering himself to a party ; I will assure him he is not religious, not in that which he receives, though it may be materially true in religion : for he doth not receive it as becomes a disciple of reason, much less of religion ; for it might have been false, or the contrary, for any thing he knows ; and for the self-same reason that he admitted this as truth, he might have admitted the contrary, if so be the party, with which he doth compromise, had offered it.

The truly religious are not idle bodies, but they do exercise themselves in the highest and noblest employment ; and their work is to affect the inward man ; and we are wont to say, that in competition the body is nothing, it is but the soul's mansion-house ; every man's mind is the man.

I will conclude all in a few words, to recommend religion to the reason of your minds.

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we are exposed to, are the guiltiness of our consciences, and malignity of our minds.

2dly. Religion doth possess us of the truest inward good,

3dly. It restores us to the object of our happiness, and to our ultimate end.

*First*, Religion doth relieve us in respect of the greatest inward evils that we are liable to, *viz.* guiltiness in our conscience, and malignity in our minds; which, if not removed, we must of necessity be miserable, as a man must be miserable tho' he lie upon a bed of down, if he be sick and distempered, and cannot be cured of internal malady. Now these two are internal evils, that are greater than any other internal evils in the world: a wound in the conscience, guiltiness in the mind; the worm of conscience, the sting of sin; these two are the life of hell. And then the other great evil is malignity, rancour, malice and poison in the mind; and this mars our natures, spoils our dispositions and tempers, and puts us at a distance and abhorrence of God and goodness, and makes us harmonize with the devil and sin. Now there is no way to be relieved in respect of these internal evils but in the way of religion, and by the blood of sprinkling, for the cleansing our consciences by way of atonement, and by the operation of the spirit, for the renewing, repairing and restoring our natures: that's the *first*.

*Secondly*, It possesses us of the truest inward good, and that in three particulars. 1. Satisfaction to a man's mind; and content, all the world will say, is one of the greatest goods; what is better to a man, than



than his mind's satisfaction? And in the way of religion, a man's mind is satisfied; for he understands upon what grounds and in what way; and he sees before him, and knows what he is to trust to. 2. Religion is restorative to the nature of man, and what is more to any man than to be internally whole? If a man hath an internal disease, an internal wound, or any inward ulcer in his mind; to restore him to perfect health and strength, this is done in the way of religion. 3. It is pacifying to a man's conscience: for what is more dreadful than the torments of a man's own breast? When a man's heart akes, though he be applauded and adored by by-standers, yet his heart akes because of his guilt; he finds internal wounds. He may fly from the world, but he cannot fly from himself; *the wicked flees when no man pursues*: and it is observed, that guilt in a man's breast, is a prophet that foretells future evils; *art thou come to call my sins to remembrance?* But innocency is stout, rises up in its own defence: but when a man is faulty, his heart will not serve him.

Thirdly and lastly, Religion restores us to the object of our happiness, to our ultimate end. So saith the Psalmist, *Psalms xvii. 15. I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.* We must be reconciled in temper and disposition, to the nature, mind and will of God, and the law of everlasting goodness, righteousness and truth; or else it will come to what Solomon saith, *can two walk together that are not agreed?* In this sense is that verified which Solomon says of wisdom, *her ways are*

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Thus have I given you an account of this full and pregnant scripture, that doth contract and epitomize our religion, comprehends the moral part of religion, that which in part will make us like God; and if these things be received into a temper, complexion and constitution of soul, we shall become God-like, and partakers of the very nature of God.

## DISCOURSE LXXX.

The importance of forgiveness of sin, and  
 it's certainty to the penitent.

A C T S. xiii. 38.

*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sin.*

**T**Hat we may the better estimate, of what consequence *this* is to us; and how much we are beholden to the divine goodness, for this great benefit of *pardon* and *forgiveness*; let us look into the evil that we are rid and discharged of, by this act of God: let us look into the nature and quality of *sin*.

*Sin*, as it reflects upon God, is an act either of neglect, or contempt. And how shall we answer it, if  
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156 *The importance of forgiveness of sin,*

we be guilty upon either account? If either we neglect our bounden duty, or cast contempt and scorn upon our sovereign? by whose power we are raised out of nothing, into being; at whose pleasure we are continued in being; and at whose appointment we shall go out of these beings that now we have: and it will not be in our power to withhold our souls from him, one moment, tho' the state and welfare of them to all eternity, did depend thereupon.

Let us also consider, what *sin* is in itself. It is a violation of the rule of righteousness, the law of heaven; from which God himself, (who is cloathed with omnipotency, in whom is the fulness of power and liberty) never did vary, from eternity; nor will, to eternity: for, *the throne of God is established in righteousness.* What, then, do we think it is for us, sorry creatures, to take upon us, to controul the immutable and unalterable law of everlasting righteousness, goodness, and truth, upon which the universe depends?

Then again *sin*, in respect of by-standers, is a thing of very bad consequence, and of ill influence; because of the prejudice of *example*. For, we are more apt to follow example, than to live by rule: and nothing is more frequent, than for men to pretend use, custom, and practice, even against an established law: and we justify our selves, as we think, by doing as others do; and that we are not singular and alone in what we say and practise.

That which we call *moral evil*, is a thing of the greatest ugliness and deformity in the world. The filthiness of *sin* is express'd in scripture under the

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names of those things that are of the greatest loathsomeness and deformity. Nothing is so bad as *moral depravation*. Corruption, rottenness, and putrefaction in *naturals*, even to stench and nauseousness, is not so bad as the exorbitance and degeneracy of an *intelligent agent*, out of the course of virtue and honesty ; because *intelligent agents* act in a higher order from *naturals* ; for, in *these*, it is only a tendency to dissolution, and *non-entity* ; and so it is a *negative evil*. But all the departures from right reason, are *privatively* evil.

Now, of what *great* consequence must this be to us, to be discharged of a thing, of so much malignity in the agent ? A thing which carries so much insolence, arrogance, presumption, self-assuming, and confidence ; lifting up ourselves above what we ought ; which not only in its own nature and quality, is a *privation*, but a *pollution* ; a thing that makes havock, and brings all into confusion ; turns all upside down, and puts every thing out of order ; so that no man can tell what will be next. Nor indeed can any one think what that man will dare to do, that durst vary from *right*. For, by the same authority that any man varies from right in any one instance, he may in all. It is *innocency* that is our protection ; and he that disrobes himself of that, opens the way to all manner of unrighteousness.

And lastly, *sin*, in its consequence, is *punishment*. For, *the wages of sin is death*, Rom. vi. 23. And, as *life* comprehends health and strength, with all happiness ; so *death* is perfectly contrary.

It



It is therefore a matter of great importance, for one of a considerative mind, and an awakened conscience, to be able to satisfy himself in this matter : and to know how he may come off from the guilt of his sin, and the punishment due thereunto. And, I shall do you very good service, if I can propose to you such grounds and principles as may satisfy your minds, in the belief of God's *forgiveness of sin*.

The *great revelation* that we have from heaven, is, above all things, satisfactory to the reason of our minds, in this matter ; in *which* it is declared, that God looks upon what our Saviour hath done, and suffered, in his undertaking for us, as a very valuable consideration for the pardon of sin, to them that do repent. Now, that we may believe *the former*, and charge ourselves with *the latter* ; I propose to you these considerations and arguments :

1. From the *goodness* of the divine nature.
2. From the tenour of *gospel-revelation*.
3. From those *impresses* of goodness and kindness, that God has stampt throughout the whole creation.
4. I shall make it appear, that it is a thing every way *worthy God*, to pardon sin to penitents. And,
5. That the evil of punishment hath the place of a *mean* only, not of an *end*.

*1st, From the quality of the divine nature, goodness.* It is the very *perfection* of the divine nature. Now, acts that flow from *nature* have two advantages ; they are very *easy and pleasant* ; they are most *sure and certain* ; for, nature fails not ; nature is uniform, regular, and constant. What nature doth, is without resistance ; against all impediments : it goes on readi-

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dily in its course ; and doth not waste and spend itself, as other agents do. A person of *good nature* doth *courtesies* and *kindnesses*, with as much freedom and readiness, as an *ill-natur'd person* doth *injuries*. And, by this, we may be assured, that *goodness* is the excellency of the divine nature ; because all other perfections become *divine*, as they are in conjunction with goodness. Take away *goodness* and nothing is a divine perfection : for, *power* and *wit* are in the diabolical state, as well as elsewhere ; and we are apt to fear *wit* and *power* ; but wherever there is *goodness*, we have expectation from it. It is not safe for wit and power to be *alone*. Our safety and security is in goodness : and it is much for our advantage that all divine perfections are in conjunction with goodness.——Never any that had the notion of a God doubted of his *omnipotency* and *all-sufficiency* ; but, the great question is, concerning his *will* : for, *here*, our hearts are apt to misgive us. He, being perfectly free, is subject to no restraint : if he hath but a mind to fail us, we give him cause enough to do it ; and hence arise our doubts. Now, to satisfy you in this, I say, that where there is all perfection in a conjunction ; there is no place at all for any uncertainty, inconstancy, variety. Resolution, and performance in such agents, always go along with the reason of things. So that if the reason of things be steady, these agents are always steady. For, *liberty*, as a perfection, is quite another thing from being licentious, or lawless. He is least of all *free*, nay he is the veriest *slave* in the world, that hath either *will* or *power* to be licentious, or exorbitant, or to vary from the  
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*law of right.* An intelligent and voluntary agent, in his right constitution, does things in due and convenient circumstances, as *certainly*, and *constantly*, as any natural agent ; and doth as surely produce noble and generous effects, as any natural cause doth produce effects that are natural. So that notwithstanding the fulness of liberty in God ; and notwithstanding his omnipotency ; yet, you are surer of him, in all cases of righteousness, and equity, than of the effect of any natural cause : because the *way of liberty* in an intelligent agent, is a higher *way of action*, and motion, than the *way of nature* ; any where besides, where there is a determination to the effect. For, you are not to think, that because you are *free* ; therefore you may act *irregularly*, or *arbitrarily*. You see, inferior nature is *determined*, and never is found out of its course : and it is to be expected, that intelligent agents do not vary from the rule of right. Nay, it will be the condemnation of them, if they do. For, *liberty* is not a deformity, but a *perfection*. And, a higher agent should be as true to its principle, as any natural agent ; which the philosopher tells us is always *determined* ; for, if it were not so, the way of *voluntary motion* would be inferior to *natural motion*, which is more imperfect ; and, the higher creation, endued with liberty and intelligence, would be principles of imperfection and deformity. — This is the *first* argument. And this is a solid foundation, What is *natural*, is *certain*. What is done *naturally*, is done *easily*. If God do good *naturally*, he doth it *easily* ; for, who can conceive that God should go against his own nature ?

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2dly, Add to this ; *divine revelation* ; and you have double security. And, for this, you have several texts of scripture : *God so loved the world, &c. John iii. 16.* From which place, I would have you to take notice of our Saviour's *merit* ; yet, that our Saviour did not merit, or by his righteousness procure his own sending ; but, *this* was wholly from the love and goodness of the father. Our recovery began at God himself : our Saviour was not the first moving cause ; but, rather, a promoting cause. Like to this is *that* which you read, *God hath raised up for us a prince, and a Saviour, Acts v. 31.* We read also, that *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself ; not imputing trespasses, 1 Cor. v. 19.* and, *by him we have access to God with all freedom, Eph. iii. 12.* So that we may accuse ourselves before God, and not favour ourselves, (as malefactors use to do ; to make the best of a bad cause ; ) but, we have such a merciful intercessor, and so gracious a judge ; that a sinner may aggravate his cause before the judge, and fare never the worse. So that whoever he be, whose heart fails him to go to God ; he doth not read these gospel-texts ; but is rather conversant with what is said of the wicked angels, *that God had reserved them in chains of darkness, &c. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.* — Now I desire that you would adjoin with the quality of God's nature, *that* which God hath declared as the result of his will : and can you have better assurance ? The *former* is a fix'd principle in God : the *latter* is his choice, and delight ; and that wherein he hath freely engaged himself. And it is to do God right, to build upon his promise, as good security ; to think



that God, of his own nature, is placable and reconcilable ; and, then, to think that he will pardon sin, upon the terms that he hath propos'd ; because that he hath promis'd so to do.

3dly, Tho' stronger arguments than *these two* cannot be brought ; yet, because there is a further confirmation in a multitude of witnesses, I superadd an inspection of *those impressions of goodness, and kindness, that God hath stamp'd throughout the whole creation.* And *there* we shall find this ; that every thing maintains its own off-spring, and endeavours to bring it to good, (according to the several natures of every kind :) *and if it be capable ; it bears its off-spring affection.* Even the stupid earth that we tread upon maintains the grass, and all that grows upon it. According as things are capable, they do express themselves ; by communication, and careful making provision for their young ones ; and by commiseration, in case of misery. The most furious creatures will expose themselves to harm, for the security of their young. This we observe, that all originals to being throughout the whole creation, have a lasting and continued respect to their off-spring ; and *from their own goodness*, they comply with the necessity of the case ; and help and relieve, if they can. Parents do so to their children ; and this is found in all inferior nature. Now *human nature*, if it be right, and be not abus'd, is, above all other natures below it, most tender and compassionate. And *this* is the security that all of us had for our lives. For we were all born in a weaker estate and condition than any other creatures : but, coming into the hands of reason, and  
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loving affection ; no creature is better provided for. This that I have observed to you, is so true ; that for this, you may survey the whole creation. It is a truth so general and universal, that I find but one instance to the contrary ; and that is, *Job xxxix. 14.* where it is said of the *ostrich*, that *she lays her eggs in the sand, not considering that the foot may crush them ; and that she hardeneth herself against her young ones ; as if they were not hers.* Now, we are wont to say, that, where there is one exception, the observation holds in all other things, that are not excepted. Yet see what may be said to this very instance that is excepted. She seems to take some care of her eggs, and to make some provision for her young ones ; in that, first, she lays her eggs in the sand, that by means of the heat thereof they may be hatch'd ; and then she covers them there, so that if they meet with any disaster, it shall be by accident. But, if any thing yet be wanting, see the account that God himself gives of it, ver. 17. 'Tis *for want of understanding.* If she knew better, she would do better. Now, whatever perfection is found in any creature, it is *primarily*, and *originally*, in God : other where, it is *by derivation* and *participation* ; but is in God, as in a fountain : nay, that which is limited, and confin'd, here below, is, *in God*, primarily, originally, and essentially.—— We all commend the merciful and compassionate disposition, above the cruel and malicious. And shall we attribute *that* to God, which we condemn in any creature ?

But then, 4thly, 'Tis a thing worthy of God.—— We may well think that God takes more pleasure

*in pardoning penitents, than in punishing obstinate sinners.* The prophet *Isaiah* says, *judgment is God's work*, but then he says, *it is his strange work*, Isa. xxviii. 21. it is *that* in which he takes little pleasure and delight. For *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, Lam. iii. 33. God's prerogative to pardon (if it be lawful to put these things in comparison) is rather more, than there is power and right to punish, and it is more effectual, and more to the purpose of God's honour and glory. For, when he pardons, he procures himself love, and gains the heart and soul of his creature : but, if he punish, the party endures because God is stronger, and he cannot make resistance. But, where God pardons, the creature is overcome ; the heart is melted ; he deprecates, and submits, and thinks himself for ever engaged to God. This I observe, that natures of any excellency, take far greater delight in having opportunities to shew favours, and to do kindneses, than in having power to punish. There are very few persons that take pleasure in being executioners of the laws that are penal : which makes the office of an informer so odious. The best of men take delight to gratify, and to shew kindness. In this case, therefore, *this* I will say, if God do punish sin, he doth that which is just : but nevertheless, God is not, by any attribute of his, under a necessity to punish sin, if the sinner repent, deprecate his just offence and displeasure, and return to his duty. God doth that which is just, if he punish sin : but then I dare not say that *'tis just* that God *should* punish, or that he were unjust *if he should not do it*. This for certain we may affirm concerning God ;  
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that he doth act in a way of the highest reason and understanding, and fullest correspondence with the right of the case. Now, a true penitent is capable of pardon : and, if he fall into a merciful hand, he may receive mercy. No man thinks that he who hath right to punish, is always bound to punish. This we hold universally, that to all supremacy of power, there is inherent, a prerogative of pardon : therefore this is inseparable from the Majesty of heaven, who is omnipotent.

But then, 5thly, *To inflict evil hath only in it the notion of a remedy ; the place of a mean, not of an end.* Now, we know, that no more of a *mean* is designed, than what is necessary for *the end*. This is that which makes a *mean* considerable, *the relation it has unto the end*. A medicine may be bitter, and costly. No man takes physick, for physick's sake ; but in order to his health. In a *mean*, we only look how far it is available to the end. God, therefore, inflicts punishment, as a means to obtain an end that is better. Therefore, sometimes he brings a small evil, to prevent a greater and a present to prevent a future ; and suffering in time, to prevent suffering hereafter ; and a harder condition in this world which is but for a while, that our condition may be better secured in the other world. The divine goodness doth aim at *two* things, in punishments, the *reformation* of the offender, and the *information* of the by-stander. And those that are in authority among us, inflict punishment, not as an *end* of their own invention ; not for *revenge* upon the party : as we observe even as to those who are guilty of the greatest crimes, as *murderers* and *highwaymen*, who



must of necessity be condemned for the publick safety, and defence of the law : yet, how much clemency do they shew towards them ? And what pains do they take, that their souls may be saved, and their bodily sufferings prove sanatory to their souls ? So that *punishment* is for doing good to the offender, and to the by-stander ; that *they* seeing the evil that sin brings upon men, may be better inform'd. Therefore I take it for granted, that where there is wisdom and goodness in the agent, all punishment is *for instruction, reformation, and bettering of the offender ; or for example to by-standers.* And I cannot tell what is good in punishment, but these two. So that *punishment* hath the place of a *mean*, not of an *end*.

A creature must not contradict the divine will ; and avow it as its privilege, and stand to it : as every one that is impenitent doth. Whosoever commits a sin against his light, judgment, and conscience ; if he do not repent of it, he contracts a habit ; and, *interpretatively*, he commits the sin over and over again : and he lives in it. For, if he did not justify it, why doth he not disclaim it, repent of it, ask God's forgiveness, and more carefully withhold his consent for time to come ? — It is not a thing credible, that God will pardon sin, *without repentance.* — To *sin* and *not to repent* : is to *speake defiance against God*, and to usurp upon him ; to deny his authority, and make ourselves lawless and arbitrary : than which nothing can be a greater affront to God. — 'Tis of *most dangerous and mischievous consequence.* He that sins openly, and doth not repent ; he doth *invite*, nay, in a sort, *warrant* other men to do the like : and therefore,

therefore, for the safety of others, it is necessary to punish such. ——— *It is not at all compassionate.* There is an incapacity in *the recipient* : Tho' there be no want of mercy in *God* : for he is infinitely merciful, and gracious : but the subject is altogether incapable, and, indeed, no man doth regard pardon of *that*, of which he doth not repent. He flights any thing of this nature. If a man doth not repent, he doth not care for God's pardon. Nay, how can that be forgiven, which the committer doth undertake to warrant, and to justify ? Such an *act of grace*, if it were offered, would be despised. ——— A creature therefore must not contradict the creator's will ; or controul the immutable and unalterable law of everlasting righteousness, goodness, and truth ; and avow it, and stand to it. For God's righteousness engages him to controul the lust of sinning, and taking delight in evil ; and it is *natural* for him so to do. As God is *the first and chiefest goodness* ; and as he is *the governor of the world* ; it doth concern him to controul evil, and to maintain right. He is supreme and sovereign ; therefore must not be affronted. But if the sinner leave off to sin, and condemn himself ; then the necessity of punishment is taken away : for *that* for which punishment is made use of, is obtained without punishment. And we never make use of a *mean*, if the *end* be obtained. ——— *Punishment*, in the hand of God, is either for the maintaining his authority ; or for the defence of righteousness ; or for the reformation of a sinner ; or for an effectual admonition to the by-stander. Now, *reformation*, and *amendment*, are better secured by mens repentance,

tance, than by their destruction. And also, *the defence of righteousness* is better secured by this way, than any other. For if men suffer ; yea, if they perish everlastingly ; they perish only on this account because they cannot avoid it. And there may be in *hell*, those that blaspheme God ; as you read in the *Revelations*. — A sinner's voluntary submission to God, and humble acknowledgment, hath more of virtue in it, and is more pleasing to God, than either being turn'd out of *being*, or suffering hell-torments to eternity. For, *the one* tends to mending the mind, (which is a thing good in itself :) *the other* to exasperation. So, Rev. xvi. 9. *Men were scorcb'd with great heat ; and blasphem'd God, and they repented not, to give him glory.* Now, if the sinner repent ; you have his consent, and his whole heart ; you have then gain'd his mind and soul ; and he doth, then, all that is in him to do. Now, it is a greater excellency, to win, and reconcile, by gentleness and fairness, than to vanquish, and overcome, by power and force. To win and overcome, by fair means, by reason and argument, by courtesy and gentleness, *these* shew wisdom and goodness ; but, to crush and subdue, may be done by power, and subtilty ; by *power*, because the person cannot make defence ; by *subtilty*, because the person was surprized, and taken at unawares. — The creature's suffering punishment, is a very sorry amends for transgression. For, what doth God gain by it ? God is so far from being recompenced by the suffering of contumacious sinners ; that I dare say, it is more satisfactory to God, more according to his mind, that a sinner should repent, and humbly acknowledge

knowledge his offence, in this state, in which he is ; than undergo the suffering of the damn'd to eternity. For, God gains nothing by the *one* ; but he hath the heart of the delinquent by the *other*.

Now, for application. In the *first place* ; since it is of such importance to us, that we have *remission of sin* ; let us dwell long upon it, by serious meditation and consideration, till our minds have assurance and satisfaction ; and till we come to a firm resolution in it. For, this is fundamental to faith ; and necessary to prevent our despair, when we come to die. For, then, it will either be the *poor security*, which senselessness or stupid ignorance works in us ; or else there will be *confusion of thought* ; and we shall not know what to do, if this knowledge be not confirm'd, and settled in the soul. A notional apprehension of *this*, will not be sufficient to give us solid content and satisfaction, at that time ; nor be a foundation for our faith to rest upon. Those words that we have read, *Rom. vi. 23. that the wages of sin is death*, will then run in our minds ; and we shall be then ready to say, *Art thou come to call our sins to remembrance ?* 1 Kings xvii. 18. Tho' men in a hurry of business, do not *now* consider ; yet, *then*, assurance of pardon of sin, will of all things be most satisfactory to our minds ; and the want of it, will be the most afflicting consideration imaginable.

*2dly*, Being well resolved and assured of the way that God will pardon sin ; let us always have it in our eye ; and put it in practice. Let us be sure that we heartily *repent* of our sins, turn to God, make application to him, and come under the terms of the covenant



nant of grace ; *that so our faith and hope may finally rest in God*, as the apostle speaks, 1 *Pet.* i. 21. All that is revealed to us concerning Christ, and the gospel, is for this end and purpose : and there is nothing in the world that is so well secured, as the pardon of our sins, and everlasting safety, in the way of the faith of the gospel : for, upon these terms it hath settlement from the perfection of the divine nature ; who is the first and chiefest goodness ; and who cannot fail to commiserate *every compassionate case*. And I declare to you, that *the case* of a creature finite and fallible, if he do repent and turn to God, is sorry for what he hath done amiss, and return to his duty ; is *compassionate*. And this we are assured of, not only from the nature of God ; but from the revelation of his mind and will. For *as* is his nature, *such* are the resolutions of his mind and will. *That sin is pardonable*, is the foundation of all our religion, and application to God ; fundamental to faith, and to all assurance, trust, and confidence in God. For, tho' the act of a creature may be aggravated, in respect of the person against whom it is committed, yet, *in themselves* they are but *acts of weakness*. And I shall shew you that they are so, in God's account and esteem : and therefore God doth not charge us so deeply for them as he might, nor so much aggravate the affronts against his own majesty ; but considers and allows for the weakness of the creature. So, *Psal.* ciii. 14. *For he knoweth our frame, and remembreth that we are dust*. Therefore, God doth not so heighten our failings, and neglect of him, as he might do, from the height and excellency of his own majesty : but he  
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doth look upon them as the failings and miscarriages of weak and frail creatures. So *Isp. lvii. 16.* These places of scripture do show that God doth consider what we are ; and gives allowance for our shortness, weakness, and infirmity ; being *the condition* in which we were made. He considers that we are but finite and fallible, and consist of different materials ; a *divine and heavenly spirit* ; and a *gross body*. He knows that we have a great government, *the ruling of sundry appetites* ; and must subordinate all the motions of sense, to the dictates of reason and understanding ; which is the greatest performance in the world. Yet *this*, human nature is put upon : and herein we have a greater province to administer, than even the angels themselves ; they not having so gross a body as we have, nor expos'd to so much evil as we are. But God, *he knoweth our frame* ; and, upon that account, is not *extreme* to mark what is done amiss. A creature, as *a creature*, is finite and fallible ; and yet we are not the most perfect of God's creation. Now, for *fallible to fail*, is no more than for *frail to be broken* ; and for *mortal to die*. Where there is finite and limited perfection, there is not only a possibility, but *a contingency* to fail, to err, to be mistaken, not to know, and to be deceived. And where the agent is such, there is place for repentance. *Repentance* is that which makes a finite being failing, capable of compassion. If repentance did not take effect, it would be too hazardous for a creature to come into being. If upon a lapse, an error, or mistake, we should be undone to eternity, without all hope of recovery, who would willingly enter upon this state ?

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These are matters fit for consideration, and very satisfactory to considerate minds, and to awaken'd consciences.

Then, 3dly, Let us entertain right notions and apprehensions of God ; and conclude that he is, of his own nature, placable and reconcilable. It is consequent upon sin, to commit a further evil ; to delight in it ; to love it, and to live in it ; and, from hence, to fear and hate God, who is offended by it. For this is certain, where men are afraid, they do not love : and where they hate, for their own preservation, if they could, they would disable such as are formidable, and in a capacity to do them harm. Now, if we look upon God as our enemy, (as we shall do if we sin against him, and do not repent :) we shall fear and dread him : and so *hate* him : not *love* and *delight* in him. For this is certain ; we always suspect that the wronged person will revenge himself, and take all advantage to do himself right ; unless we make our peace with him. And were *God* like unto *us*, there were just cause for this suspicion. But we may satisfy ourselves from what God hath declared ; that there is no cause to fear, in the way of repentance and faith : for as much as God will perform the terms of his own gracious dispensation ; which is to pardon all such as sincerely repent, and believe the gospel.

4thly, If this be true, that we cannot be rid of sin, save only by some act of God ; then let us not do *that* which is so much to our own prejudice ; upon such easy terms as commonly, to offend : since it is not in our power to undo it. For sin committed cannot

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not be avoided, unless by God's pardon, as well as our repentance. And our repentance is but our qualification for pardon. *Pardon* itself is the act of God and depends upon the use of his power. God hath power over his own right ; and may abate of it what he pleaseth. Now, if a man once sin ; farewell, for ever, the righteousness of innocency : *this* is that which can never be attained : for it can never be made, that *what* hath been done, was not done : or, that every sinful act did not deserve punishment. In this state of sin, we are only made whole, recovered, and restor'd : and this relief we have by the divine grace. So that we cannot in any reason allow ourselves to commit iniquity for the time to come, or to return to folly : for this were *to turn the grace of God into wantonness*, Jude 4. and to abuse the divine benignity, and compassion, and to make void the effect thereof ; and to do what in us lies, that the sins that were forgiven before, should return upon us again, as the debt that was forgiven did upon the wicked servant that we read of, *Mat. xviii. 23. &c.* Let us, *therefore*, admire the divine mercy and goodness ; that those things which we know we have committed, should be made as if they never had been, by God's pardon and forgiveness : that they should be as tho' they never had been, in respect of any danger or punishment to us. Yea, that God, to whom vengeance belongeth, should lay aside thoughts and purposes of revenge ; and so freely pardon what we have done amiss : that God, who is our great creditor, should cancel all obligations, and comply with the necessity of our case ; without which we could



could not be happy. *For the redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever,* as to any thing that we can do, *Psal. xlix. 8.* But, *here,* that which was not in our power to do, is done for us, by God ; to wit, pardon of sin ; and he hath provided that which was necessary for his own satisfaction, which was not in our power ; and hath left nothing upon us to do, but that which we may easily perform, through the assistance of his *grace* ; which he is ready and willing to afford, that we may be enabled to repent, and to leave off to sin. And thus God hath made our condition hopeful, which we had made desperate. Inasmuch that God may with great reason expostulate with us, and say ; *why will ye die ?* and, *what could I have done more for my vineyard than I have done ?* Isa. v. 4. What could I have done more, in consistency with the *design* of my *creation* ; having made and invested man with *intellectual* nature ; and given him reason and understanding ; and consequently, liberty and freedom ?

But, *lastly,* with which I will conclude : let us learn of God, to afford one another the like measure, for this is our Saviour's argument, *Mat. v. 45.* and *xviii. 33.* We having been partakers of the mercy of God, should show mercy unto others, and deal with one another, even *as God deals with us.* It is not possible for a man to be a true christian, and not to forgive one that asks him forgiveness, is sorry for his sin, and is willing to make the best satisfaction that he is able. It is not christian to live out of love and good-will ; or to harbour envy, hatred, malice, ill-will, or displeasure ; or to have thoughts of re-

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venge. He that doth so, doth not believe that God hath pardoned him his sins ; for, if he did, *this* would cause him to forgive his brother. If we have in our souls *a true sense of God's goodness to us* ; it will form us into the *like* disposition of kindness towards men. —Whosoever they are that partake of the divine nature, do thus ; and they that do the contrary, live in the devilish nature. —Let therefore all them that complain of the badness of their natures, and say it is a burden to them, come under the power of this consideration : till they are conform'd to a near agreement with the divine perfection. Reason and argument are *transforming principles* in intellectual natures. And, it is not possible where men are informed, and satisfied with good reason and argument, but it should work upon them : Therefore, I advise those who are sensible that they carry coals, and are full of ill-will, and entertain thoughts of revenge ; that they do, day by day, think upon this argument ; till they have wrought out all malignity out of their souls. For, they do not *believe* God's pardon, who *cannot pardon* : for, men are apt to think *that God is like unto themselves*, Psal. l. 21. Now, if we justify ourselves, in *this*, and think it our priviledge and prerogative, to bear ill-will, malice, and thoughts of revenge ; —we shall attribute the same unto the all-powerful God ; and, if it be so acceptable unto us, to render evil for evil, and to be revengeful ; we shall think that it is pleasurable unto God also, to destroy his enemies ; and, that he will do it, and prosecute revenge against his rebels, to the utmost : for, we are well pleas'd with our own disposition and temper ; and, *that* which

which we do approve and justify in ourselves, we shall attribute unto God; for, if it were not (in our opinion) a perfection; we should condemn it, in ourselves: therefore as such, we shall much more attribute it unto God. To conclude. Let no *anger, rancour, malice, or displeasure*; let no thoughts or purposes of *revenge* harbour in any man's breast; as he would have God placable and reconcileable unto him, and as he desires to believe the pardon of his own sins, when he goes out of the world.

## DISCOURSE LXXXI.

The great benefits that accrue to us by our Saviour's being in our nature.

ACTS xiii. 23.

*Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.*

**T**He promise of the *Messias* doth bear the most ancient date; no sooner was there place for it, but he was promis'd, and declared; which was upon the fall of *Adam*. And it was not reasonable to think, that God should declare himself for the pardon of sin, before sin was committed; for, that would have been, to indulge, invite, or encourage man to sin: but, no sooner is man become guilty, but the promise is made, *that the seed of the woman*

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shall break the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15. Which St. John comments upon, in these words, *for this cause the son of God was manifested, to destroy the works of the devil*, 1 John iii. 8. And this promise is often repeated to the patriarchs successively one after another; to *Abraham*, to *Isaac*, to *Jacob*; as also in the types and shadows that were under the *Mosaical* dispensation; as the apostle tells us (*Heb. i. 1.*) *God who at sundry times, and divers manners, spake unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, &c.* That which is now plainly declared unto us by the *Messias*, was darkly represented by the prophets. But, in *the fulness of time* (*that is*, the time that God had appointed and resolv'd upon) he sent forth his son, and exhibited his *Messias* unto the world. Now this is a point of the greatest import to mankind that could be, after the fall of *Adam*; for, remission of sin depended upon it. And this is a matter of so great concernment, that we are undone without it. For, unless we can get discharged of our sin and guilt, we must sink under it. See therefore how punctual and particular the scripture is, in this matter! as is plainly shown in *the text*: in which you have *six* things very remarkable.

1<sup>st</sup>, It is declared here, *who he was*, by his name *Jesus*; by which *he* was as well known among men, as other persons are known by *their* names.

2<sup>dly</sup>, The text tells you of his *family*. He was of the seed of *David*, as the very verse before says. And this is done upon a double account: *for distinction*; and *for better satisfaction*: because the former predictions and promises that were concerning *Messias*,



*fias*, declared that he should be of the house and lineage of *David*, that so men might be more assured that this was *he*.

3dly, You have in the words ; *who* appointed him. *Of this man's seed bath God raised up to Israel a Saviour.*

4thly, You have *the moving principle* : and that is *God's faithfulness*. 'Tis according to his promise, that *he bath raised up to Israel a Saviour Jesus.*

5thly, You have to what purpose God rais'd him up ; namely , to be a *Saviour* ; which is more fully explained a little before, *chap. v. ver. 31.* *He raised him up to be a prince and Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* Where you have the two great gospel-benefits, *repentance* and *remission of sin* ; and the one in order unto the other. You have an extraordinary person rais'd up, to an eminent purpose ; to give repentance, and remission of sins. You have heard of others that were Saviours in measure and degree ; as *Moses* sav'd the people from the *Egyptians* ; and the *Judges* that God raised up successively, that delivered the people of *Israel* from their enemies ; but, never a Saviour in this kind, before : for *the redemption of the soul is precious* ; and no man can redeem his brother, in this respect, *Psal. xlix. 7, 8.* It must be such a person, as is a prince, and a Saviour, made so of God, that must appear in this business ; to save men from their sins. And this *Jesus* it is, that God sent to bless us, in turning away every one of us from his iniquity.

6thly, You have *them* to whom he is thus given to be a Saviour ; *the nation of the Jews.* To *Israel* in the

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the first place, as the scripture speaks, (*Acts* iii. 26.) *to you first ; and then to all nations, (Acts* xiii. 47.) *I have set thee for a light to all nations, and for salvation to the ends of the earth.*

You see that all these great things which concern the *Messias*, and are matter of our faith, you have them *all* in these words : but, in other institutions of God, you have either *all*, or *most* of the circumstances left out ; and many things left to our christian prudence, liberty, and good affection. And this I shall observe in one or two cases.

And first I will instance in the institution of *the Lord's supper*, which you have in these few words, *do this in remembrance of me, Luke* xxii. 19. Where you have only the action, and the explication of the action. But, *now*, there is abundance of questions moved about it. As for instance ; *In what company ? What preparation ? At what time ? How often ? In what posture ?* Whereas, all these are left undetermined. So that as to these, I dare undertake that we are not liable and obnoxious to God ; provided we do with reason ; and observe that which is comely ; and retain christian charity. And because this is a matter of consequence, and worth taking notice of ; I will make it evident, *that there is no appointment of God, in any of these matters.* First, We are not appointed, *in what company.* And yet, how many lay this for a foundation ? Yet, at our Saviour's first institution, there was no curiosity at all, in respect of the company : for, he did admit *Judas*; *Luke* xxii. 21. whose internal malign disposition he did very well know : and yet he was present at the

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first sacrament. And you know that all laws are most rigorously and punctually observed at their first making. For, if a lawgiver do not insist upon a punctual observation of his laws, at their first constitution ; he doth tacitly consent to the laying of them aside. *Secondly*, Nor any appointment *at what time* : no set season for the doing of it, commanded by our Saviour. For, they were met upon another occasion ; not for this business. *Thirdly*, Nor any *particular disposition* that we find required by our Saviour, as *peculiar* to that business. It is true, they were taken in a passover-preparation ; but they had no antecedent warning, nor knew what our Saviour was about to do ; till he did the thing. At the *pass-over* there were *four* eatings, and *two* drinkings : and our Saviour puts a new notion upon one of the cups ; and one of the breads. It was *a religious exercise* they came about ; and so were in *a religious disposition* ; wherein approach was to be made to God : which doth intimate *this notion* ; that *they who lead christian lives, and follow the rule of our Saviour's doctrine, may freely and indifferently make application to God, in one holy exercise, as well as another*. Whosoever lives according to the difference of good and evil, and governs himself so that he may make application to God, either by prayer, reading, meditation, or christian conference, or any other christian duty, is in a preparation and disposition, wherein he may come safely to the table of the Lord. I know there are many men that think not of any preparation for prayer, or other christian duties ; yet, pretend to some curiosity in their preparation, when they are to come

to the sacrament. Not that I would discourage mens preparation for this duty : but, is not the object of worship the same ? It may be, their apprehensions of danger are grounded on these words which tell us, that *they eat and drink damnation to themselves*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. but, is it not also said, *the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord* ? Prov. xv. 8. And, that *he will not hear them, when they pray unto him* Psal. lxvi. 18. By which it appears, that it is not safe for men to lay all the weight upon *one* piece of religion ; and to be trifling and neglective in *others*. *Fourthly*, Neither it is said *how often* men must communicate in this sacrament, but, *as oft as you do it*, &c. 1 Cor. xi. 25. Now the nature of the thing doth sufficiently secure *frequency*. For, it is a thing *grateful* in the matter, and *beneficial* ; so, quite another thing than many of the *Mosaical* rites and ceremonies were ; of which it is said, that many of them were *grievous* and *burdensome* : but this is highly grateful and beneficial. What can be more pleasing, than to remember so great a benefactor as our Saviour ? One that did undertake and engage in our behalf ? They that are rightly apprehensive of the reason of the thing, will be induced to frequency, and careful attendance upon it. *Fifthly*, Neither is it set down in *what posture* they should communicate : for, our Saviour takes them, as he finds them. But we are apt to be superstitious ; and to make ourselves rules ; and to form such notions by which we create difference in religion, and trouble to ourselves and others. And it is greatly to be feared, that so much of curiosity as a man bestows about any piece of religion and



devotion that is *of his own formation*, so much he will abate in his conscientious observance of that which is *of God's institution*.

I might also shew you the very same thing in *the other institution*. For, there you have only *the material action*, and the acknowledgment. *Baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost*, Mat. xxviii. 19. now, how hath the world been troubled about the circumstance of *time*, and several other things about this sacrament? and *all* without foundation. But, there is no warrant for this, from the institution. And charity hath been wanting, when men have gone about to make out scripture further than what hath been plainly declared. So that I resolve with myself, that *God having* invested man with *intellectual nature*; and given him that high privilege, and prerogative of *reason and understanding*, doth expect that he should act according to those principles: and, where *he* doth not constitute and appoint, limit and determine; that *there* he doth refer himself to the rational determination of *that first principle*, the principle of *his creation*. So that, whatsoever is done throughout the life of man, that *there is reason for*; it is warranted by *God*: provided, still, that a man doth not vary from any particular and express institution of God, in scripture. And, if this were understood, we should have the very foundation of differences in the church of God taken away. It is but a vain pretence of *zeal for God*, and *doing him service*; for *us* to limit, appoint, constitute and determine, beyond what *he himself* hath done.

'Tis

'Tis a good notion, universally ; *let us be as free under God, as we can ;* and resolve, with St. Paul, *not to be brought under the power of any thing.* 1 Cor. vi. 12. So far as God doth declare, we must follow his direction. But it is best for us, where he doth not limit and determine, to follow the reason of our own minds, in the free use of our liberty. God doth so far acknowledge his own *workmanship*, as to refer himself to the principles of creation in man, so far forth as he doth not limit and determine. For *do* but with reason, and you *do* well. There is no *superstition* in using things *not commanded of God* : but, in using them *as necessary pieces of religion*, they are *superstition*, and offensive to God. I say there is no superstition in using things not commanded by God, *even in the worship of God* ; if they be comely and such as reason doth allow of. But there is superstition in assuming to ourselves *authority to use them as necessary pieces of religion*, and as *sanctified* by divine institution ; when they are not of God's appointment.

You see now, that in matters of weight, wherein the honour of God, and the safety of mens souls are concerned, scripture is punctual, clear, full, and particular : that our faith may be better directed, and we ourselves preserved against cheats and impostures. But as to other matters, they are left to christian prudence, discretion, and fidelity. And God's love and goodness appears to us exceedingly, in *both these cases* : ——— *both that he is clear, full, and particular, where 'tis for our advantage and security.* ——— And also, *that he doth not unnecessarily resolve or determine*

*us, where the things themselves do not require it : —*

In the former ; because if we should mistake there, it would be to our loss and great disadvantage, because of the importance of the matter ? Whether it relate either to matter of faith or practice : in the latter, where the matter is not so necessary, in itself ; nor our obligation to the thing itself ; nor any intrinsick value in it ; here, it is God's goodness to us, that he will not limit and determine. For, it is hazardous to a man in minute things, to be obliged in point of conscience. If the thing be good in itself, I am admonished daily how to act, by the rectitude of my temper ; because the thing is good in its own nature, and quality : but, in the other case, I have nothing but the security of my memory. This is a great point of divinity, that God hath left us, in the christian religion, as free as we may be, without loss or prejudice to ourselves : we being only determined to things of weight, and to such things, wherein if we should fail, we should greatly hurt ourselves. For, it is a great privilege, not to be obliged without necessity ; not to be under restraint through the necessity of the precept ; where there is no necessity in the matter. And this I account one of the great privileges that we have by the gospel. And here, as the apostle adviseth (*Gal. v. 1.*) we should stand fast in that liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free. And that this is a great privilege, is clear, from *Acts xv. 10.* where the apostle calls the ceremonies, and observances, commanded under the law, a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. In this dispensation there was every thing punctually determined, both for substance, and cir-

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cumstance : so that they had need of very good *memories*, to bear them all in mind. Whereas, it is a great security for my observance of God, that I have *the security of the goodness of my temper*, as well as *my memory*. And thus it is, in all matters of weight and moment. But, if it be a *positive command* ; and that, of a thing wholly *arbitrary* ; and which (if God had pleased) might have been omitted ; then, I have only *the security of my memory*. And this is a choice notion in *divinity* : but, prepossest minds will not bear it ; though it be never so much for their ease and advantage. But, let him *that hath ears to hear*, hear, *Mat. ix. 15*. I will say it again. There is not, in christian religion, any obligation upon us, but it is either one or other of these *two* : either, *first*, The reason of the thing doth require it : and then it is necessary *in itself*, as is *observance of God ; reverence of deity ; and regardful apprehensions of him ; — righteousness and justice between man and man ; fair and equal consideration ; doing as we would be done unto ; —* or *sobriety and temperance ; purity and chastity in the government of ourselves* : I say, either they are such great things as *these* ; or else, *Secondly*, the things commanded, are *medicinal and supplemental*, in case of guilt, and contracted impotency by reason of sin ; as *going to God, by Jesus Christ ; and the application of the benefits that are by our blessed Lord and Saviour ; the virtue of his blood, for pardon of sin ; and what he hath done, engaging in our behalf*.

And we shall see great cause thankfully to acknowledge God for this great benefit, if we do but consider the occasion of *Adam's fall* ; who did not fall upon



on a transgression of a *moral point* ; but, in variation from a *positive institution*. And for ought I, or any body else, know ; if God had not prohibited him *the tree of life* ; he might as well have eaten of *that*, as of any other tree in the garden : for, *she saw that it was lovely to the eye, and fit for food : and therefore she took of the fruit of that tree, and did eat, and gave unto her husband*, Gen. iii. 6. Here, they had only *the security of their memories* ; and, not of any *internal disposition*. So it is said of *Nadab and Abihu*, that they were struck dead *for offering strange fire before the Lord*, Num. iii. 4. One fire, to reason, seemed as good as another, to offer sacrifice with : but, because there was an institution to the contrary ; whether they did it wilfully, or carelessly ; they perished by fire. Also, let us remember the *Bethshemites*, who being transported with joy and affection, *looked into the ark* (a thing contrary to God's appointment) to the hazard of their lives, 1 Sam. vi. 19. Likewise *Uzzah* in his zeal, when he found *the ark* ready to fall, as he thought, put to his hand to keep it up, and was slain for his labour ; it being contrary to God's institution, 2 Sam. vi. 7. When we think of these things seriously, we shall find cause in abundance, thankfully to acknowledge God's goodness, that we are *engaged*, only where *the nature of the thing doth engage* ; and that we are not made liable, and obnoxious to God, in things that are not *evil in themselves, and hurtful for us*. It is greatly hazardous for a finite and fallible creature, to be limited and confined by *will and pleasure*, where there is no reason, that the mind of man can discern, why he should be

be restrained. For, we are mightily for *liberty* : and unless we be satisfied in the reason of the thing ; we have a great desire to look into that which we are prohibited. 'Tis hard to be subject to *will* ; as it is natural to yield to *reason*. Therefore, it is not a thing that we should affect, to come into bondage, or be determined more than God hath determined us——Let these things be weighed by those men who love to multiply *positive institutions*, and to determine the liberty of our minds, in circumstances and punctilio's ; in things where God hath not limited or determined us. For my part, I will not part with that *liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*. And, this is one part of our *liberty* : I must confess the greatest of all is, *to free us from the guilt and power of our sins* : but, the next is this ; *to put us out of danger, and free us from the obligation of conscience, where reason, and the matter itself, doth not oblige us*. The *moral part* of religion is indispensibly necessary ; because every piece of it doth sanctify by its presence : as for instance, *humility, modesty, righteousness, temperance, reverence of deity*, and the like : *these things* cannot be in any man's mind but they make him holy : whereas *the instrumental part of religion* doth not sanctify by presence. For, you may pray, and *hear the word*, and *receive the sacrament*, and be wicked still : but every thing of *the moral part* of religion, doth sanctify by presence, just as a remedy, or cordial, or diet, doth do a man good, by receiving it.

But to speak, now, of the great benefits that accrue to us, by our Saviour's being in our nature. He doth acquire

acquire the right of redeeming us ; and makes satisfaction in that nature that had transgressed : and, he doth repair the ruined nature of man, by dwelling in it, and by working righteousness in it : by which means he hath wrought out *all malignity, and naughty habits*, by contrary acts ; *the acts of sin and vice*, by acts of virtue and goodness ; *the acts of intemperance*, by acts of sobriety and temperance.

Now, let us look for the explication of this, *in ourselves ; in our nativity from above ; in mental transformation, and deification*. Do not stumble at the use of *the word*. For, we have authority for the use of it, in scripture, *2 Pet. i. 4. Being made partakers of the divine nature ; which is in effect our deification*. Also, let it appear *in our reconciliation to God, to goodness, righteousness and truth ; in our being created after God, in righteousness, and true holiness*, Eph. iv. 24. It was a signal evidence of a divine power in the disciples of Christ, at the first publication of the gospel, that it wrought so great an alteration in all those that did receive it. The envious, debauched, and disobedient, it made temperate, sober, and religious, humble, and *good-natured*. It converted the embracers of it, to a life more suitable to reason, and nature and all moral virtue.

We may observe from this, that nothing of the natural state is *base, or vile*. Whatsoever hath foundation in God's creation, or whatsoever the providence of God calls any man unto, it is not *base*. For our Saviour himself *took flesh and blood* : and *that* is the meaner part of human nature. Whatsoever is *natural*, hath nothing of disparagement in it ; nothing

thing that exposeth a man to contempt, and scorn. And this may satisfy those that are in the meanest offices and employments ; that there is nothing base, that hath place in God's creation. That which is vile, base, and filthy, is *unnatural*, and depends upon *unnatural use*, and *degenerate practice*.

Also, observe here, the great honour put upon human nature ; when *the son of God* came into it ; when divine goodness did take into consideration the rise and advance of created nature ; and to recover and raise it to all possible perfection : *he did take to himself a peculiar relation to human nature*. — Then let us take consolation in this. For, it cannot be thought, that God did so great a thing, and of so deep a consideration, as to unite human nature to his own existence, and to set it at his own right hand, to the admiration of angels, (for he saith, *let all the angels of God worship him*, Heb. i. 6.) that he did such a thing as this is, to beget a notion, or to raise a talk, and make a wonder in the world, and put the creation into a gaze and astonishment. God doth nothing, for so light an end ; and especially not his great things, such as these, which call for fear and reverence on our part. This we may say, is one of the greatest works of God. This, if possible, doth transcend the very creation of God, at first : for, there was nothing there to resist him : but, in the restoration, there was malignity and sin. God did this, therefore, for the great and inconceivable good of that *nature* that he hath so highly honoured. Therefore, what consolation should we have from it ! what declaration should we make of it ! what thanksgiving



ing for it ! Having this knowledge ; how should we rejoice in God, and be above the world ! how should we depress the immoderate motions of sense, and favour spiritual things ! that so we may the better understand this great *mystery*, by which we are so highly honoured, And this is the proper use of this high and noble argument. — Therefore, let this be explicated, verified, and fulfilled in us. For, *this* you must understand ; that *religion* is not satisfied in notions ; but doth indeed, and in reality, come to nothing, unless it be in us not only matter of knowledge and speculation ; but doth establish in us a frame and temper of mind, and is productive of a holy and virtuous life. Therefore, let these things take effect in us ; in our *spirituality*, and *heavenly-mindedness* ; in our *conformity to the divine nature*, and *nativity from above*. For, whosoever professes that he believes the truth of these things : and wants the operation of them upon his spirit, and life ; he doth, in fact, make void, and frustrate what he doth declare as his belief : and so he doth *receive the grace of God in vain*, 2 Cor. vi. 1. unless this principle, and belief doth descend into his heart, and establish a good frame and temper of mind ; and govern in all the actions of his life and conversation.

*Religion* is not a *particular good* only ; as meat against hunger ; or drink against thirst ; or cloaths against cold ; but it is *universally good* ; a good, *without limitation or restraint*. For *holiness* and *purity of mind*, is the self-same thing to the mind, that *health* and *strength* is to the body. — It is good *also* in point of *satisfaction to the judgment*. For, no man that

that useth reason, can otherwise sit down contented, unless he be in reconciliation with God ; unless there be fair terms between God and him.—— It is good also upon the account of *peace and settlement of conscience* ; upon which, the greatest good of man doth depend ; for want of which, nothing *without him*, can make any compensation.

Now, to shew it in particulars. *Religion* (which is, in substance, *our imitation of God in his moral perfections, and excellency of goodness, righteousness and truth*) is that wherein our happiness doth consist : and we then relish the truest pleasure and satisfaction, *when* we find ourselves reconciled to God, by *participation of his nature*. They who have not this sense of God, may have a religion to talk of, and profess ; a religion, to give them a denomination ; but, they are not at all in the true state and spirit of religion, nor, have they any real benefit by it ; nor, are they any whit enabled by it : nor have they the more peace and satisfaction from it. But, when our minds are transformed by religion ; then, we feel (at least, *at times*) strong and vigorous inclinations towards God. And, with these motions our minds are best pleas'd and satisfied ; because these are most suitable to nature, and the highest use and employment that human nature is capable of. Upon this account it is, that there is more pleasure and satisfaction in *contemplation*, than in any of the pleasures of sense ; and that those men that live apart from the world, and are taken up in meditation, and contemplation, their pleasures are more intense and solid, than those of the licentious, and of such as please themselves in all the gratifications

ons of sense. There is no heart's ease like to that which riseth from sense of reconciliation to God, and walking in ways of righteousness. For, in these ways, mens hearts never check them, nor occasion them any disquiet. For, let the world say what they will, to be challenged by the reason of a man's mind, goes nearer to a man's heart than the censure of all the world besides. To act contrary to the reason of one's own mind, is to do a thing most *unnatural* and *cruel*: it is *to offer violence to a man's self*; and to act against a man's truest *use* and *interest*. For, all manner of wickedness is *a burden* to the mind: and every man that doth amiss, doth *abuse himself*. For, it is not possible for any man to run away from himself, or to forget what he hath done. He must stand to the bargain that he hath made; and abide by the choice that he hath taken: and, in the whole world, there is nothing so grievous for a man to think of, as that, when he did amiss, and made a mad choice, he went against the sense of his own mind; for, in this case, he is not heart-whole. There is no man who *knows himself*, but knows what I now speak is *true*. Tho' I know it is common in the world, for men to do against reason, and *to live by chance*: and not to pursue any true intention, or follow any worthy design: but, as it happens; and, as company and occasion leads them; so they act, be it better or worse; not considering, that *what* matter of disease is *to the body* (which many times is very grievous, and so indisposes a man, as to put him quite out of self-enjoyment) the same is, malignancy *in the mind*, guilt in the conscience. Nay, I may say, that *these* are much more

more troublesome and grievous to be born, than any malignant matter of disease can be to the body.

They make no true judgment of religion, that take it to be a *limitation*, and *restraint* upon man's liberty. Yet, some are so foolish as to think, that, if God would, we might have lived as we list, and have been released from those many obligations that religion seems to lay upon us. Whereas, this is as great a *lie* as ever the father of lies could invent. For, religion is not a burdensome and troublesome thing; which, if God had not commanded, might have been forborn, and all things have been as well. No; there is nothing in *real* and *true* religion, that is of that nature. And, this I dare defend against the whole world; that there is no one thing in all that religion which is of *God's making*, that any sober man in the true use of his reason, would be released from, tho' he might have it under the seal of heaven. For, such a dispensation would be greatly to his loss and prejudice: as much as if the physician, instead of giving wholesome physick to his patient, should give poison. For, all things in *real religion* tend either to *conserve*, or restore the soundness and perfection of our minds; and to continue God's creation in the true state of liberty and freedom. So that if a man did understand himself, and were put to his choice; he would rather choose to part with the health and soundness of his body, than with the purity and integrity of his mind. For as much as the one is his far greater concern: and he had much better live with a distempered crazy body, than with a troubled disqui-



et mind, and guilty conscience.—— But, on this subject, I have many things to say ; and therefore will digest them into five heads.

*First*, Man by his nature and constitution, as God made him at first, being an intelligent agent, hath *sense of good and evil, upon a moral account*. All inferior beings have *sense of convenience or inconvenience, in a natural way* : and, accordingly, all inferior creatures do choose, or refuse. For, you cannot get a mere animal, either to eat or drink that which is not good and agreeable to its nature. And, whereas we call this *instinct* ; it is most certain that, in intelligent agents, this other is *instinct*, at least. And, for this reason, man is faulty, when either he is found in a naughty temper, or any bad practice. For, he hath judgment and power of discerning : he is *made* to know the difference of things : and he acts as a mad man, that knowing what is *better*, chooseth *the worse*. This is the ground and foundation of man's being truly *miserable* ; for, to be happy, or miserable, is mainly in his intellectual nature. Inferior natures may suffer wrong : but they are not capable of happiness or misery, as intellectual agents are ; because they are not acquitted or condemned *from within* ; nor have any thing to challenge or reprove them.

*Secondly*, Man being *made* to know God ; hath sense of his own privation, in the loss of so great and universal a good as God is. For, he is made happy in the enjoyment, and miserable in the loss of him. And, tho' diversion, and other enjoyments, may give some entertainment, for a while ; yet when a man stays at home, or returns to himself by consideration, he

he feels inward perplexity in himself ; because some necessary good is wanting to him. His own knowledge makes him capable of good and evil ; and sensible of being miserable, if he be deprived of that good which God made him capable of. Such is the nature of our souls, that they cannot be happy, but in this way, and by the use of their intellectual faculty. Otherwise, the soul will be sensible of its privation and loss.——*Virtue*, and *vice*, are the foundations of *peace and happiness*, or *sorrow and misery*, there is inherent punishment belonging to all naughtiness : and no *power* can divide or separate them ; but they will follow one another. For, tho' God should not, in a *positive way*, inflict punishment ; or any instrument of God punish a sinner ; yet he would punish *himself* : because he cannot be satisfied in what he doth contrary to reason, and the sense of his own mind. There is no security to a sinner : the least that will attend him, is *fear*, and *suspicion of danger*. Diversion (which is the way that many men take,) going to some pleasure, or into company ; is but a *put-off*, for a while : and when they retire, it will return upon them, with greater force and violence. For, all *moral evil* is against the nature of man, and condemned by the reason of the mind : and can no other way be prevented but by the motion of repentance and application to God.

*Thirdly*, Our souls acting upon God, discover their virtues ; and display their powers ; and show their mettle and sprightfulness. Whereas, if a man be diverted from God, the *reason of his mind* is as much without employment, as the *eye* which is *in the dark*,

for, it is the presence of the object, that puts the faculty upon acting. So, if *God* be withdrawn ; our minds cannot be drawn forth ; for, they are without their *proper object* ; for, other-where, save only in *God*, our souls are not matched, so as to make proof of themselves. We know not our powers and faculties, but by their *acts* : and we cannot act, but in the presence of the *object* ; if a man be separated from *God* ; his mind and understanding are without their proper object ; and, so, are as little to him, as his sight is to him, when he is in the dark. I am apt to think, that in the heavenly state hereafter, when *God* shall otherwise declare himself to us, than now he doth ; those latent powers which *now* we have, may open, and unfold themselves ; and thereby we may be made able to act in a far higher way, than we are at present. *Now*, we have many avocations and diversions : but, *when* we shall come to have nearer approaches to *God* ; we shall have more *use of ourselves* ; and shall find ourselves more *able*, than we are at present, in this limited and contracted state. For, this we have present experience of ; that if we give ourselves up to meditation upon *God*, and employ our minds in sincere intention of him, and his service ; we do thereby ennoble and enlarge our faculties, which otherwise would shrivel up, and grow every day less and less. I am very confident, that by religious motion men are a thousand times more improved, than by any worldly drudgery whatsoever.

*Fourthly*, Because of the vast desires that are in man, there is great dissatisfaction in all things *below a man's self* : and *that*, all worldly things are. The mind

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mind of man is greater and larger than to be satisfied with any thing in this world. So that when application is made to him by *riches, honour, pleasure*, and the like ; it is but all in vain : for, *they* will all say, *content is not in me* : and, that they are not able to do what men expect. And from hence will arise great dissatisfaction and discontent, because of *frustration* and *disapprovment* : for, here, a man must call himself a fool, to doat upon any thing, without grounds ; and for making an ill choice, and conceiting as a fool. This will make him uneasy, and ashamed of himself.

*Lastly*, Every state and temper, according to its quality, whether good or evil, is to have a suitable portion of happiness or misery. Now the state of sin, is the worst state in the world ; and therefore it is meet that it should fare the worst : and the state of goodness, is the best state ; and it is meet that it should fare accordingly.——As I said before : if God should let a sinner alone, his misery and unhappiness would arise *from himself*. And should a good man fall into never so many troubles and afflictions : yet he would have *satisfaction in himself*, and peace in his own soul ; because he was not conscious to himself of any evil, nor had contracted guilt in his mind.



## DISCOURSE LXXXII.

*The obligations and advantages of good-will.*

EPHES. iv. 31, 32.

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another ; even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.*

**I** Have shewn you formerly that the design of these words, is to discharge our minds of all *ill-will* and *displeasure*, one against another. And I am now to give you reasons and arguments, in pursuit of this exhortation. I began as high as heaven ; and told you, that it was in conformity with God himself ; and in compliance with his loving-kindness to men, and his usage towards us. And, certainly, *religion* in us, is *our imitation of God, and resemblance of him*. For, in respect of God's communicable perfections ; as goodness, kindness, beneficence, clemency, mercy, and compassion, we ought to imitate and resemble him ; and I am sure that God is not known by any thing *more* to us, *than* by these. And what is more reasonable, than that we should be *that* towards one another, that God is towards us all ?

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That which the text pleads for, and presseth upon us, is the tenor of the christian doctrine : whether you take it as laid down in prophecy ; or as it expresseth itself in precept and command ; or as it is made out in the temper of those that entertain it. In *the old testament*, nothing is more decried than unrighteousness, cruelty, oppression : and in *the new testament*, nothing more called for, than mercy, kindness, compassion. 'Tis *that* which was required in all times, in all cases, of all men : Never any dispensation in this matter : never any allowance to the contrary. 'Tis a matter of full resolution ; and required with a general *non-obstante*. And, this cannot be said of very many points in divinity.

Now, this *disposition* is requisite for our own ease and safety. A man would live in love, if it were but for his own peace and quiet. For, that man is at heart's-ease that neither *is* nor *hath* an enemy : whereas, he that *is* an enemy, is never quiet, if he carry displeasure in his breast : so, if he have justly made an enemy, he loseth the liberty of his own thoughts, the freedom of his own mind ; he feareth, and is feared. So that the peace, quiet, and security of ourselves, depend upon the composure of our own minds. If a man live in love, he is devoid of fear : for, there is no fear in love : whereas fear hath torment. But *perfect love casteth out fear*, 1 John iv. 18. If a man hath an enemy, he is either meditating *revenge*, or *defence* : and a man had better be asleep in his bed, than thus employed.

In a due consideration of one another, we should live in hearty love and good-will. For, such is the condition

dition of man in this world, that we stand in need of one another's help. For, we are all of us very weak and exposed to many evils, *from within, and from without*; and every man finds that he hath enough to do, to govern his own spirit, and to bear his own burden. Let us not add to it, by offence, and mutual provocation of one another. It may be, did we but know, and were acquainted with the condition of others; we ourselves would think it very hard measure, to add to their sorrow; and we would rather help to bear their burdens.

'Tis but a *just allowance for the frailty of the present state*. For, no man's *bodily constitution* is the matter of his own *choice*, or within his own *power*. If it be *choleric*; that exposeth a man to rashness and fury: if *melancholy*, to sowness and severity: if *flegmatick*, that exposeth a man to dullness, heaviness, and sleep: if *blood*, to frowardness, petulancy, and wantonness. And our minds are tempted to comply with bodily-temper. 'Tis only by *virtue* that a man doth bear up against bodily temper and constitution. It is very apparent, that the material part of *virtue* and *vice* have a foundation in bodily-temper: tho' it be neither virtue nor vice as it is the effect thereof: but virtue and vice are constituted by the consent of the mind. Yet this I say, that our souls pay the dearest rent in the world, for their habitation in these bodies. Therefore, to pass this; he is little sensible of the frailty of human nature, who doth not make *fair allowance*, and *candid construction*; who doth not easily incline to the better part; who cannot overlook mistakes, and have patience

tience with men a while, till they recover themselves out of passion. And much more unmindful are they, and forgetful of the incidencies belonging to this state, who set themselves to exasperate, inflame, and further to provoke, by unkind returns and misconstructions beyond and against a man's meaning and intention.

But, I see there is one thing that will rise up, with a colourable pretence against all that I have said, if it be not removed : and that is, in case of different apprehension in some things about religion, in which case men say, it is *zeal of God, for truth* ; and that they ought to be *zealous for the truth* ; and think they may prosecute their brother upon that account, because he is not of their judgment : he is in an error, they say, and therefore they think they ought to bear him down, upon this account. Therefore, this pretence must be examin'd. To which end I shall suggest these several considerations.

*First*, It cannot be avoided, but that men must think, *as they find cause*. For, this is most certain, that no man is master of his own apprehensions ; but he must think (and cannot avoid it) *according as he finds cause*.

*Secondly*, It is *no offence* to another, that any man hath the freedom of his own thoughts. By this, he doth his neighbour no wrong. For, thoughts make no alteration abroad, nor make any disturbance ; and a wise man will enjoy these, and not expose them in a disorderly manner. For, a generous notion is not to be prostituted. Truth is too noble a thing to be exposed in case of mens dullness and incapacity ;  
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202 *The obligations and advantages of good-will.*

in case of indisposition and imprudence. Men may be unqualified for hearing truths ; as 1 Cor. iii. 3. *where there is envying, strife, and division.* He is a conceited fool that cannot enjoy his own thoughts ; and keep them from such as are not capable to receive them. This was the notion of the philosophers who distinguished between the truths that were fit to be communicated to *those without*, and to *those that were prepared*. They would not cast their pearls before swine.

But, *Thirdly*, Serious and considerate persons such as are real, and sincere in their religion, do not *greatly* differ ; to wit, *not in those things wherein the honour of God, or the safety of mens souls are concerned* ; (for, these are the *substantial things* in religion :) neither do they see that *that* follows which one that doth dissent from them, doth infer to the prejudice of either. Yea, they are so far from admitting any such consequence ; that they will much rather renounce their opinion, than hold any thing that is either prejudicial to *God's honour, or the safety of mens souls*. This I dare undertake is really true of all that are sincere and hearty in their profession of religion. And therefore to these there is due, patience, and charity. I am much of *his* mind that did thus apologize for those that did dissent, tho' they were in an error. " They do not err in their affection to God, religion, and goodness ; though perhaps they are mistaken in their choice." But, then, 'tis far better for men to have some mistakes in their way, than to be devoid of religion. 'Tis better for men to be in some mistakes about religion, than wholly to neglect

glect it. These very things argue that the persons are awake ; and are in search after truth, even there, where they have not attained to it.

*Fourthly*, Whatever private apprehensions are in other matters ; wise and good men do observe the measures of peace and order, *in foro externo*. For, they go by this rule, *that peace and good-will among men, is of greater consequence than any private apprehension*. Therefore, wise and good men do so moderate themselves, that they will observe the rules of peace and order.—*Zeal in defence of truth : conscience in observation thereof, are high titles ; things of great name ; but greatest mischief follows, when passion and interest are so cloathed*. The priests and Pharisees were our Saviour's accusers : the Zealots were the destruction of the city and temple, as *Josephus* gives account : the Jesuits, denominated from *Jesus*, are the incendiaries of the world. The more of our fancy there is in that we take up for our religion, the more warm we are in defence of it. We love our own creatures, and doat on our own notions. Who hath reason on his side, satisfies himself that the best is done that can be done, when reason is shewn : he trusts to it, sits down, expecting that reason should prevail.

*Fifthly*, We are all, whether we dissent or agree, one with another, in *some matters*, agreed about *this* ; that we all ought to be guided by scripture. Now *scripture* is clear, full, and perspicuous, in all matters of *life* ; and absolutely determining in all matters of *necessary belief*. But, in other things ; we being removed above sixteen hundred years from the apostles, and,

204 *The obligations and advantages of good-will.*

and, since in the intermediate ages, many things have been agitated by the several parties, and disputed *pro* and *con*, and yet not agreed about ; and since it doth hardly appear, what was the apostles judgment in those controverted matters ; since they are what we cannot certainly determine by their writings ; and no application to be made to any person inspired since that time in the succession of ages ; if we do err in these matters, it is much less than if we had lived in *their* times. They that are settled in the great matters of life and faith, will out-wear mistakes in lesser matters : or, if they do not, I dare undertake from the warrant of scripture, that if they hold the head, *Christ Jesus*, such mistakes shall not hurt them. For this, see *Phil.* iii. 15.

Therefore I do resolve, that by that time we have made due allowance for the different *temper*s of men, for the different *make* of mens parts, for *mistakes* occasioned from company and converse, as also for those that have been occasioned from our education, and for *conceits* rooted in men, and become natural to them, because they have so long thought after this or that manner ; we shall in the end find little reason for anger and displeasure towards one another upon this account. The different *make* of mens parts is such, that *ab origine* without any affectation, contrivance, or design (which are the things that make men culpable) foundation is laid of disagreeing apprehensions. For some mens apprehensions cannot possibly hit, in any thing : they are, as it were, cast in different moulds : and they can no more help this, than they can make their faces to be alike. We may  
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look at this, as an effect of the various wisdom of the creator. 'Tis no more faulty, than that *one star differeth from another, in glory* : since the wisdom of God appears in the several dissimilitudes and diversities that are in the world : different makes, shapes, constitutions, as to the body ; different senses, imaginations, choices, satisfactions, as to the mind ; varieties and diversities above us, and beneath us, — I say it again ; that by that time we have made a just allowance for our different tempers and constitutions, which are not *subject to our choice* ; for our different makes, whereupon such variety of apprehensions depend ; since there are men of such different makes, that in nothing they think alike (or, at least they do not express themselves alike, where they mean the same thing ; ) by that time we have made allowance for the error and mistake of our own age, and the ages that have been before us ; when we shall have made allowance for the general suppositions which oft take place ; for pre-conceived opinions from education, company and converse ; for conceits rooted in men, and become natural to them, because they have long thought so ; by that time we have made a just allowance for all these considerations, and abatement proportionable ; we shall find little reason for anger and displeasure with one another, upon occasion of these differences.

I add, further ; that since *religion* is a bond of union, and lays an obligation upon us to God, and to one another ; it ought not to be a ground of any difference or displeasure : and, religion is *in an unnatural use*, if it doth disunite. Neither are we qualified,  
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206 *The obligations and advantages of good-will.*

to pursue truth, or to find it out, unless our minds be discharged of all ill-will, anger, and displeasure. For, envy, ill-will, strife, and contention, are as prejudicial as any other inordinate affection whatsoever. Sublime knowledge cannot dwell in an unquiet spirit.

'Tis wholly an unchristian temper that is given to strife and contention, as might be shewn by several scriptures, 1 Cor. i. 10. *I beseech you by the Lord Jesus Christ*, (see what an obligation is here ! And for what is it ! Namely this) *that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, &c.* So 1 Cor. iii. 3. the apostle tells them that they were carnal, because there was among them *envyings, strife and divisions*. Nothing doth more unqualify a man for divine and heavenly knowledge, than this temper. So Jam. iii. 13. 14. &c. ——— If men value themselves by their opinions, and different apprehensions from others ; and so far arrogate to themselves, as to reprobate other men for not entertaining their opinions ; there must of necessity be high provocations, great exasperations. Whereas, if men do calmly propose, with a submission of their sense to an impartial examination ; then, the things that are offered will be taken into consideration : and men may be either better inform'd, or else they will be further confirm'd in what they thought before, if they find that other persons grounds are inferior to theirs. Upon which account it is true kindness, to impart *what* one finds cause to believe, and *what* the grounds are of such persuasion ; leaving the party to judge, as he finds cause. Yea, I account it the greatest kindness that

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that one man can do to another, better to inform his judgment, and, then, leave him to consider. For, he that is wise, when he is apart, will call into examination what he hath heard : and, if what hath been offered, be that which he had not considered before, or taken notice of ; so that he finds that what was declared was weighty, he will hereupon find cause to alter his judgment.

But *lastly*, *Passion* is so exorbitant a thing, that it is not to be confined to any measure of *reason*. For, it is in our minds, as fire in our houses, which devours and destroys all that stands before it : and the more it goes on, the more harm it doth. So it is with *passion*, if not presently allayed : it will break forth, as wild-fire. *Reason* and *virtue* are things that have bounds and limits ; but *vice* and *passion* are boundless. The work of *order* and *government* in every degree, is, *the maintaining of peace, preserving every body in his right, and the continuing friendship, general love, and good-will amongst men*. He who hath the advantage in any association or convention of men, is chiefly bound to maintain general good-will, friendship, love. 'Tis the life of society. Conversation of men each with other, supposes it, and depends upon it. In *converse* the rule is, *give and receive*, wherefore this is called intercourse, as implying a communication by way of exchange ; notion for notion, apprehension for apprehension ; one expression of affection for another. Wherefore, better never *meet* (as much as it is desirable in itself, or recommended in scripture, *Mal. iii. 16. Heb. x. 25.*) than to come together to provoke, inflame, exasperate one another. It is a charge

charge on every one who comes into company, not to misbehave himself: that neither he himself, nor others, part the worse *for having met*. Whatever converse is not peaceable, tending to love and good-will, and governed thereby; is to loss, is no good expence of time, is not accountable. If we will be acquainted, let friendship be between us: else we should remain strangers. One would wonder, when one thinks on it, that persons who meet to converse together, should fall out, and quarrel; and that, all should end (as it does *sometimes*) in a duel, and thirst after one another's blood: that instead of pleasure and satisfaction of conversation; there should be provocation, exasperation: that where acquaintance began, for a foundation of love and goodwill, mutual kindness and beneficence for the future; there should be seeds sown of ill-will, and lasting displeasure, sometimes entail'd on posterity. But on the other side: how well pleased persons are severally, when they part in love? How uneasy, if in displeasure? What different after-thoughts in these two cases? other apprehensions, purposes, intentions, resolutions: *and this*, according as carriage has been in company.

I conclude; one would not live out of good-will, for one's own ease and safety. Whosoever bears not good-will, hath *that* within himself which tempts him to ill offices. His thoughts run out, on defence of himself, and disabling the other; as if he were his enemy. Sense of his own ill will in himself, makes him jealous and suspicious of the like from the other. For, who suspects, thinks himself suspected. We do not think them our friends, to whom we are not friends.

friends. We think not better of others, than ourselves : nor impute to others, the good disposition we have not. — Now after all this said, and shewn, for general love, and mutual good-will ; how grievous would it be, to come into any of your company, where any matter of offence were either given, or taken ; any unkind word spoken ; any cause of provocation, or ground of displeasure ; or any thing contrary to peace, hearty affection, mutual love, and good will ? Things, the foundation whereof, are laid in the nature of man (who was made sociable) and which the gospel acknowledges and doth reinforce. — From all that hath been said, I shall make some *inferences*, and so conclude.

In the *first place* ; acknowledge we the excellency of the christian religion, whose doctrine and practice are such as you have heard. *Religion* was given us by God, for the good of men, both severally, and jointly. 'Tis for a man's security, for his benefit, and advantage. It gives a man heart's-ease, and composure of mind : sets him right, in the government of himself ; and also engageth him to good behaviour to all other men. Therefore, I may say ; whosoever he be, that hath heard, read, or considered the doctrine and principles of the christian religion ; if he wish well to mankind, he will stand up, and bless that doctrine ; and say as *Solomon* doth of his excellent woman : *many daughters have done virtuously ; but thou hast excelled them all*, Prov. xxxi. 29. The very principles of ordinary philosophy, if put in practice, do abate the fierceness of mens minds, and will not suffer them to be exorbitant, furious, wild

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and extravagant. But, christianity roots out the very foundation of all ill-will ; and doth bind a man absolutely to good behaviour, and engage him to all the effects of love, good-will, and charity. So that, did any man rise up amongst us, and act christianity to the life, according to the notions, rules and principles of it ; it might be said of him, as of *Noah*, that he was *a preacher of righteousness*, 2 Pet. ii. 5. Tho' he held his tongue, tho' silent ; he should yet speak, and appear most admirable to all the world, and be the most effectual preacher. But, *here* is the unhappiness : we do not live up to our *christian profession*, nor do that good which we might : and, tho' we are orthodox in our judgment, and speak well, yet we speak and profess more than we practise ; and upon this account, it comes to be prejudiced ; because we are not in temper and disposition, nor in life and practice, *what* we profess.

*Secondly*, From hence we learn how unnatural to the temper and spirit of christianity are our brave *warriors*, and mighty *conquerors*, that over-run nations, and put all into hurry and confusion to enlarge their bounds and territories. How unnatural are these things to christianity ! Never any thing in the world so contrary to christianity, as *wars*, *commotions*, *exasperations* and *confusions*.

*Thirdly*, If we profess ourselves to be *christians* ; then let us take care to govern our spirits, and rule our tongues, and to direct our actions according to *our profession*. For, we have no religion, if we do not these things. At least, let us take care to be innocent, and harmless : and especially, how we use  
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our tongues. For, St. *James* hath told us what a world of mischief comes by the tongue ; that it is a *little member ; but full of deadly poison ; and doth set on fire, and is set on fire of hell*, Jam. iii. 8. But, this is the mischief too ; that the tongue doth express the sense of the mind : for, *out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh*, Mat. xii. 34. And men shew their spirits by their words and actions. If the heart were free from rancour, malice, and ill-will ; the miscarriage of the tongue would be very rare, and would be much less : for, then, there would be no ill intended. But, men do greatly disparage themselves by sudden, rash, and inconsiderate speeches. By nothing can a man sooner discover an unchristian frame of spirit, than by an ungoverned and unbridled tongue.

*Fourthly*, Let us still remember, when there is any occasion of dispute, or debate, that we are under the obligation of christians : and let any man rather choose to abate of his *right*, than to lose his *charity*.

*Fifthly*, From hence we see that *peace-makers* and *reconcilers* are the men that do truly christian offices ; and that the contrary sort are the devil's instruments in the world.

*Sixthly*, Government, *we see*, hath a good foundation : for, it keeps all in peace, and binds men to fair carriage, and good behaviour : upon which account it is of mighty use in the world.

*Lastly*, Whosoever hath not a penny to bestow, whereby he may express his charity ; yet he may be more charitable, than if he gave pounds. For, it is the choicest piece of charity, to make fair interpretations,

212 *The obligations and advantages of good-will.*

tations, and to give allowance ; to make candid construction of mens actions ; to afford civil and courteous behaviour, to be conversant and complacent. These things tend to maintain *love* and *good-will* among men ; than which there is nothing more creditable to the christian religion ; nor any thing more subservient to the great end of mutual edification. So that this argument doth extend itself to all persons : and a man may be transcendently charitable, as to the most sublime acts thereof, tho' he have not one penny ; if he be a man of a fair carriage, one that affords equal and candid construction, and takes things in good part ; is affable, courteous, in all things accountable, and ready to give satisfaction ; and one that does all that lies in him, to maintain love, and good-will in the world. This man is of a most christian temper, and *charitable* in the most excellent sense.

You see how many arguments I have suggested, to engage men to humanity, courtesy, and universal charity ; so as if it were possible, to promote a general reconciliation in the whole creation of God. — Now by humanity, fair carriage, and suitableness of disposition, a man doth gain a general interest ; and this is an argument to a man's self. Also, in acting thus, he doth act according to the true *genius* of human nature. For, there is in man, a secret *genius* to humanity ; a *bias* that inclines him to a regard of all of his own kind. For, whatsoever some have said, *man's nature* is not such an untoward thing (unless it be abused,) but that there is a secret *sympathy* in human nature, with virtue and honesty ;  
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with fairness and good behaviour ; which gives a man an interest even in bad men ; and whereby they are even before they are aware, inclined to reverence and honour such a person. And tho' through passion, and interest, and bad custom, they are put off from the practice of it ; yet they cannot but approve it, and *them* that practise it ; upon which account, it is observed by the *wise man*, that they who retain their innocency, and live according to the principles of human nature, they are justified in the judgment of such persons, from whose humour, and practice, they do altogether depart. Wherefore, we may detest and reject that doctrine which saith, that God made man *in a state of war*. Undoubtedly, man, if he have not abused himself, is the mildest creature under heaven. *Man* is a sociable creature, delights in company and converse : and, by conception of notions, and power of utterance, is fitted for conversation. It is delightful for *one* man to see the face of *another* ; for, a man sees another *self*, another of the same kind, (all being made by the same *exemplar* ; after the image of God :) and, a man would not, on any terms, be in the world, with creatures below him ; which would be presence, but not converse. It is not more pleasurable to see the sun, after a cold dark night ; than it is cheering and reviving, in the darkness and confusion of our thoughts, to refresh our mind by presence and enjoyment of a person we love. But, nothing spoils the nature of man, as to converse, more than *false zeal*. What can we think of the uncharitable, envious, malicious, spiteful ? Of *those* who are quarrelsome, contentious, litigious ?



214 *The obligations and advantages of good-will.*

of *those* who are revengeful, implacable ? cruel, burdensome, intolerable ? selfish ; who care for no body besides themselves ? given up to passion ; wrathful, furious ? traducers, defamers of others, backbiters ? who plot, contrive to destroy *for religion's sake* ; are barbarous, inhuman, bloody, to serve ends of religion ? *Tantum, religio !* &c. Is this the religion of Christ ? Is such a religion worth having ? Is not *good nature* which a man is born to, a better thing ? Is not the virtue heathens have applauded and practised, far more valuable ? — Yet some who pretend to religion, are *such*. — But they must change their nature, or lay aside the profession. If *this* be religion ; *what* is worse ? — Common *good nature* makes men innocent, harmless, inoffensive, conversable. If the party's religion doth not this, at least ; it is something else in the place of religion. We say it of some, *that they are the worse for their religion* ; otherwise, *good natur'd persons*. How strange is it, that any should be so mistaken, as in pursuit of their religion, to do such things as *reason* is against, and *nature* startles at ?

Now to draw up all in a conclusion. We are all of us, in respect of one another, free, absolute and independent ; having our own proper employment, and concernment, both for time, and for eternity : and it may be said of us all, in this respect, we are our own masters ; and must stand or fall by our own actions : but we have not liberty *to judge, and pass sentence upon our fellow-servants*, Rom. xiv. 4. neither have we ought to do with each other, save only to do for one another all the good we can ; and to receive

receive from each other, what good we may. We have nothing to do to usurp authority, and tyrannize in God's family ; or to *beat our fellow servants*, Luke xii. 45. Yea, our several relations each to other, lay a new foundation of mutual good offices, and payment of respect. And we may do good, and receive good from each other more ways than one. That is true, which God said to *Moses* : *I have made thee a God to Pharaoh*, Exod. vii. 1. A man to a man, is, in a sense, *in the place of God*. When God made a *second*, it was (in his intention) to be a help to the *first*. We may, and ought to be *helpful to each other* ; and if we were as we should be, we should be the better provided for, the more people there were, and the more men we had in the world. As particularly : ——— By *counsel and advice* ; in case of ignorance, uncertainty, and inexperience : for, some have knowledge in *some things*, and others in *other*. And herein we may be greatly profitable each to other : ——— By administering *comfort*, and *encouragement* to one another, in case of entanglement, and suffering : ——— Also, *in a way of supplement*, where we are insufficient, either to bear our burden, or discharge our duty : upon which account it is said, *wo to him that is alone : for, if he fall, there is none to help him up*. 'Tis well spoken of *Seneca* in this case :  
“ A man is so made for society, and it is so useful  
“ for men, to join themselves to each other, that  
“ there is no man (he says) to whom it is not better  
“ to be with *any body*, than always *by himself*, alone.”  
But, *to do one another harm* ; and, *to receive harm from each other*, in any kind whatsoever ; I say *this* ;  
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216 *The obligations and advantages of good-will.*

it is violent, and unnatural, in respect of the purpose and intention of God's creation. For, the apostle tells us, that *God made, of one blood, all the nations of the earth*, Acts xvii. 26. We are as members of one family ; and proceed from one stock. And from hence there is a foundation laid, of mutual good offices ; and to do otherwise, is violent, monstrous, and unnatural. — It is to break through, and cast off the superadded obligation that is laid upon us, by the christian religion. — It is to make *the world* less tolerable, habitable, and passable, than it is *of itself*. For, do we the best we can ; the world is bad enough. And we shall contribute to make times and places worse ; if we do not discharge ourselves in mutual good offices one towards another ; or, at least if we be grievous one to another.

From this which I have now superadded to all that went before, you may understand that it is with very great reason that the apostle doth call upon us, to be kind ; full of bowels and compassion ; ready to gratify and forgive ; that so we may be mutually helpful one to another ; and, by the comfort that we afford to each other, make the times and places we live in, the better.

Now, could I persuade to this ; it would be as new Jerusalem coming down from heaven ; and the very angels descending among us ; even those blessed spirits that give God thanks for his grace and goodness towards men ; and cry continually, *glory to God on high, peace on earth, good-will to the sons of men*. — O blessed spirits that are free from that canker of envy and malice ! Who, tho' they see man's nature advanced

vanced above theirs, in the person of our Saviour : yet they are not aggrieved at it ; but rejoice, and bless God, for his goodness to mankind ! — It is divine, heavenly, and angelical, *to take delight in the good of others.* Certainly, we are not well settled in our judgments, as to *this point of religion* ; which makes us so negligent in our duty. It is too much the practice of the world ; *every man* to be *for himself*, and to leave *God* to be *for us all*. We generally practise so weakly and uncertainly in this matter ; as if we had not considered the obligation that christianity lays upon us to *this duty*. Whereas, it is absolutely and indispensibly necessary, that whosoever professeth the faith of the gospel, should live in *universal love and good-will*. And, if any man find himself averse hereto, and hard to be satisfied, in case of offence, and provocation ; I will yet further supperadd *three great mischiefs* that will follow upon it.

*First*, We do not at all express *our participation of the goodness of God*, in Christ.

*Secondly*, If we carry in our breasts, any ill-will, malice, or displeasure, against any one ; it is an argument that we ourselves *are not forgiven of God*. For, did we believe that we ourselves were forgiven of God, we should afford to do the like, and to forgive our brother.

*Thirdly*, By this means we do unqualify and indispose ourselves for forgiveness, and *to believe the pardon of our sins* at the hand of God. For, that which the psalmist saith, *Pf. l. 21. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself*, proves often among men. And *that* which a man approves and allows in



218 *The obligations and advantages of good-will.*

in himself, he will attribute and ascribe unto God. No *ill-natured* people think well of God. If a man allow himself to live in ill-will, and to entertain displeasure, and thoughts and purposes of revenge; he will think that God, having all power, and being more offended by *us*, than we are by *one another*, will certainly be avenged of us. And, I will never believe that an *ill-natured* man, one that lives in malice and displeasure, one that hath thoughts of revenge, and one that aggravates injuries, can think that God will pardon him. For, if we do believe that God hath pardoned *us*; it will engage us to pardon *one another*.

And, further: let it be considered, that we, that are sometimes prejudiced by others, may at other times do a prejudice ourselves; accidentally, if not designedly. And, as we would desire that a man should either wholly forgive, or sit down with moderate satisfaction; in like manner, should we deal with our brother that hath offended us. For, who is it that hath not at some time or other transgress'd and given an offence? Therefore, let us not too long insist upon an injury, nor too long remember it. The noble philosopher saith, "'Tis a more generous thing to overlook and take no notice of an injury, than to pardon it." And, if we would secure ourselves; it is best so to do; for, if we seem to resent an injury, we make a person our enemy; whereas, if we overlook it, or turn it off, by a candid construction, we shall win and engage him, and he will think that we are better-natured than himself.

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Nay, further yet : by *candid construction*, or by *overlooking an injury*, we shall frustrate the ill design of him that intended us ill. Such a man must think with himself, how base a thing it is, to design harm towards so innocent, so harmless, and worthy a person, that will by his ingenuity, and candour, interpret an injury into a kindness. Whereas, if we be too quick in our resentment, we may make *that* an injury, which was none ; and so disturb ourselves when we might have been quiet. For, certainly, if a man consult his own ease, quiet and satisfaction, and will keep himself in a *God-like frame and temper* ; he will not live in malice, and ill-will, nor continue displeasure.

And thus I have done with this great argument, *let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, &c. be put away ; and, be ye kind, one to another, tender-hearted ; forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.*

D I S-

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## DISCOURSE LXXXIII.

The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit.

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I PET. iii. 4.

*The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price.*

**I** Have spent a great deal of time, in erecting a fair and beautiful<sup>d</sup> fabrick ; a superstructure of *love*, and *good-will* ; of christian *charity*. That I may not lose my labour, I now return, and look a little after the better settlement of the foundation. For this purpose I have made choice of these words. All depends upon a good *frame*. and *temper of mind* ; a *meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price* ; a thing, highly pleasing and acceptable unto him.

We find, it is in vain for any one, to attempt to purge the stream, unless he first cleanse the fountain. You must begin at the spring-head. *The heart* is the principle of action. Life begins *there* ; and motion is from *thence*. It is that which *first* lives, and *last* dies. Our Saviour tells us that *what proceeds out of the mouth, comes from the heart, and so defiles a man*. For, *from thence come evil thoughts, murders, blasphemies, &c.* Mat. xv. 18. And Mat. v. 28. our Saviour tells us of *the adultery of the heart*. And Mat.

*The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit.* 221

xii. 34. *Out of the abundance of the heart, &c.* And verse 35. *A good man, out of the good treasury of his heart, bringeth forth good things, &c.* Men shew their spirits by their words and actions : and *these* are as they are meant, and intended. The greatest performance in the life of man, is the government of his spirit. So Prov. xxv. 28. Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty : and he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city.* He that doth subdue the motion of irregular passion, doth a greater matter than he who conquers nations, or beats down walls and bulwarks. Therefore give me the man, of whom I may say ; this is the person, who in “ the true use of *reason*, (the perfection of *human nature*) who, in the practice, and exercise of *virtue*, (its accomplishment) hath brought himself “ into such a temper as is con-natural to those principles, and warranted thereby.” Of all other men, I may say, that they have neglected their chief business ; and have forgot the great work that was in their hand ; and what ought chiefly to be done in the world. For, the greatest thing that lies upon every one to do, is the regulating of his own mind, and spirit. And he that hath not done this, hath been in the world to little purpose. For, this is the business of life ; to inform our understandings, to refine our spirits ; and, then, to regulate the actions of our lives : to settle, *I say*, such a temper of mind, as is agreeable to the dictates of sober reason : and constituted by the graces of the divine spirit.

Now that I may give you an account of this in the text, this *meek and quiet spirit* ; I must do it, by looking into the state and operation of it. Through



222 *The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit.*

Through meekness, a man hath always fair weather within. — Through meekness, he gives no manner of offence or disturbance any where abroad. And, in particular, I may say these several things of the meek and quiet spirit.

*First*, There is no ungrounded passion ; no boisterous motion ; no exorbitancy, nothing of fury. — No perplexity of mind, nor over-thoughtfulness. Men that are thus disquieted, know not what to do, can give no answer, nor can resolve on any thing. — No confusion of thought ; for that is darkness within, and brings men into such disorder, that they know not what is before them. — No eagerness of desire ; no impetuosity. They do not say with her, in the scripture, *give me children, or else I die*, Gen. xxx. i. No respect to God, or man, will quiet or moderate such spirits, if they have not what they are bent upon. — No inordinacy of appetite ; but so as always to be governed according to the measures and rules of reason and virtue. — No partiality, or self-flattery. One of a meek spirit, does not over-value himself. Those of the contrary temper, are always putting themselves into a fool's paradise ; conceiting above what there is sense or reason for. — No impotent self-will. He that gives way to self-will, is an enemy to his own peace, and is the great disturber of the world : he is an *anti-God* ; imposeth upon God himself ; and is within no law. — And, (in the last place) no fond self-love. All these are verities of this meek and quiet spirit. And these are great things, and tend to happiness ; are suitable to our state ; becoming the relation we stand in to God,

God, and to one another. The *meek in temper* are freed from all those internal dispositions that cause a great deal of unquietness in the world: For, as mischievous as the world either is, or is thought to be; our sufferings *from abroad*, all the injuries that we meet with *from without*, are neither so great, nor so frequent, as the annoyances that arise from *discomposure of our own minds* and from *inward malignity*. I say, that they who complain so much *of the times*, and *of the world*, may learn *this*; that the sufferings from injurious dealings from any *without us*, are nothing in comparison to those we find *from within*. For, this inward malady doth altogether disable the senses and succours of reason. This is a constant malady; and by this, self-enjoyment is made very uncertain. This is the *first* thing, that through *meekness of spirit*, we are always in a calm; have fair weather within our own breasts; and do arrive to a good state of health, and settlement.

*Secondly*, Through this *meekness of spirit*, there is good carriage and behaviour towards others. — The *meek* are never injurious, or censorious; but are ready to take in good part, and make the best construction that the case will bear. They will account other mens faults, rather their infirmity, than their crime: and they look upon the harm done them by others, to be rather inadvertency, than design; rather contingent ill accidents, than bad meaning. — The *meek* man is a good neighbour, a good friend; a credit to religion, one that governs himself according to reason, makes no injury by any misconstruction; and in case of any wrong done, sits down with

224 *The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit.*

with easy satisfaction: ——— How much do men differ, upon account of *moderation, meekness and fairness*? We find, upon our ordinary application to some persons, that they will admit any reasonable and fair proposal; be ready to hear and take in good part; are of easy access, fair conditioned, easy to be intreated: but others there are of so bad a condition, that you may come twenty times to them, before you find them in a good mood, or fit to be dealt withal. They are seldom in so good a disposition that an indifferent proposal may be made to them. But for those that are of *meek and quiet spirits*, I may say of such persons, either that they are very ready to grant what is desired: or else, if they do deny, it shall be upon such grounds of reason as will satisfy.

But because things are best known by their contraries; I will shew you *who* those persons are, of whom it cannot be said, that they are of *meek and quiet spirits*; to wit, *the proud, the arrogant, insolent, haughty, presumptuous, self-confident, and assuming*. For these are boisterous, stormy, tempestuous, clamorous. These persons will put themselves and others, as much as they can, into a flame. These are the disturbers of mankind: and their neighbours are rid of a burden, when they are removed. What *storms* and *tempests* are in the world natural, *these* are in the world moral. Earthquakes, storms, and tempests, do not ly more heavy upon the world natural, than these men do upon the world of mankind. But, *meekness* doth so qualify the soil, where it is; that all the *moral virtues* will there thrive and prosper; such as *humility, modesty, patience, ingenuity, candour*. But *ma-*  
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*lice*, and *envy*, are the worst of vices ; being the greatest degeneracy, and participation of the devilish nature. *These* have no place in this *meek* and *quiet spirit*.

*Lastly*, I add that an *ill-natured person*, is altogether *incapable of happiness*. If, therefore, it hath been any one's lot, either to have been born, or bred to an *ill-nature* ; I say in this case, he is more concerned to apply a remedy, than he that hath received a deadly wound, or is bodily sick, hath to apply himself to the *chirurgion*, or to the *physician*, lest his wound or disease should prove mortal. For, these inward maladies will otherwise prove fatal to his soul : and the only remedy to be applied, is *self-reflection*, *due consideration*, *self-examination*, and the *exercise and practice of virtue*.

Observe, now, the incompetency of the world's judgment. How fond and partial is the world, who do applaud the *great disturbers* of mankind, such as make havock and desolation in the family of God, bring in confusion, and turn all into hurly-burly ! giving to such as these, *titles of honour* : naming them *conquerors*, and *victorious persons* ! How fond, (I say) and partial is the world ; who do so magnify the fame of high-spirited, turbulent, self-will'd persons ! thinking them men of courage and resolution : and, on the other hand ; accounting the innocent and harmless, to be persons of no spirit or activity. Whereas, the greatest *sign of power*, and *bravest performance* in the life of man, is to *govern his own spirit*, and to *subdue his passions*. And, *this*, if the scripture may give judgment, is the greatest *ornament* belonging



226 *The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit.*

ing to a man, and that which is the most valued by God, from whose judgment there is no appeal. *The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* And, good old Jacob, when leaving the world, when about to bless his posterity, he came to Simeon and Levi; remembering their horrid cruelty, it puts him to a loss, *O my soul, come not thou into their secret, for instruments of cruelty are in their habitation, &c.* Gen. xlix. 5, 6. Things are very differently accounted above and below.——And by this, it appears that the guise of the world, and the fancy of men, are the most impotent and fond things imaginable.

And further yet, as to the judgment of scripture in this case. This is the true temper of religion, and prophesied of the gospel-state, Isa. xi. 6. and lxxv. 25. Our Saviour, in his beatitudes, Matt. v. begins with this spirit. And, that this is the temper that shall rule, and prevail, in the gospel-state, consult these scriptures, Eph. iv. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 11. A man cannot speak a good thing, without meekness. If he speaks of God, of matters of reason and religion, he spoils that which he meddles with, if he be not meek. For we must in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, 2 Tim. ii. 25. No good notion will take place, no good seed can be sown, no plant will thrive; every thing that is divine and heavenly, will vanish, if it be not settled by this temper, Jam. i. 21. and iii. 13. *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge amongst you; let him shew, out of a good conversation, his works, with meekness of wisdom; wisdom is not, but in conjunction with meekness,* 1 Pet. iii. 15. There is

no religious disposition, or good conversation, where it is not. *Meekness* must accompany all motions in religion, or else 'tis *passion*, or a man's *own interest*. Without this, we are out of God's way, and have not his blessing, *Psal.* xxv. 9. And this is that qualification that makes us capable of the promises of the gospel : tho' this temper be accounted, by the incompetent world, a kind of sheepishness ; and, such as these, are thought to be persons of no mettle nor spirit ; yet *the holy spirit* reckons otherwise. See how the scripture reckons of *Moses* ; of whom it is said, *he was the meekest man upon earth*, *Numb.* xii. 3. and yet a person of great courage and resolution. How doth he appear to *Pharaoh*, to his face ? tho' threatened by *Pharaoh*, who was a man of the greatest power. How did he act in the greatest dangers ? Yet, of this *Moses*, of whom the greatest performances are recorded, it is said, that *he was the meekest man upon earth*. We read of the *Messias*, that *the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him ; the spirit of counsel and might. With righteousness he shall judge the poor ; and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth*, *Isa.* xi. 2. and lxi. 1. These are acts of *authority* and *power* ; and thus is the *Messiah* declared. Consider also that *St. Paul* useth the *meekness* of our Saviour for an argument to persuade others to that temper. *I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ*, *2 Cor.* x. 1. And *Mat.* xi. 29. our Saviour saith, *learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart*. ——— From all that I have said, it doth appear very reasonable, that we should appeal from the judgment and sentence of worldly spirited men, who applaud persons that are

of ventrous undertakings, of fierce resolutions, of impotent passions, and unreasonable affections.

Wherefore let every man, in the first place, look after his *home work* ; what he hath to do at *home*, to establish in himself a due frame and temper of mind ; for, till this be done, he is not fit to walk *abroad*, or to have to do with *others*. When this is done, then there will be *patient forbearance*, and *making allowance*. This is that which the apostle adviseth, *Gal. vi. 1.* *Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault ; ye which are spiritual, restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* If any one do us an injury, and transgress, let us make him that allowance that God makes *us* ; let us make him an abatement for the *weakness of his nature*, and for the *multiplicity of his principles* ; for that government that he is charged withal. It may be, he may be at odds with himself, and his inferior appetites in rebellion and confusion : and it must be some time before he can recover himself, and bring things into order again in his family. God allows for this ; and we should allow for it, in one another.

'Tis necessary, whenever we have to do with one another, that there should be given *fair allowance*, and consideration of mens infirmities, tempers, and constitutions. For, it is a very hard thing, for a man to work off *these*. The *choleric* are of quick and hasty apprehension, and readily do resent. The *phlegmatick* are more dull and slow, and do not so readily consider, they must have leisure, and time, and what is said must be often repeated : and you must represent what you have to say, with all advantage. Also they

they that are of *sanguine* and *melancholy* constitutions, do not fit each other. That which is pleasing to one is grievous to the other. The pleasantness of the one, is not suitable to the seriousness of the other. The *melancholy* temper must have time and leisure ; the *sanguine* temper doth all presently. Therefore we must bear with one another, in those things wherein we differ, if no moral evil be there. Take every man *at the best*, and you will find him good for *some* purposes. Therefore bear with him, wherein he is weak. 'Tis *unmanly* to take any one at a disadvantage, and very *unchristian* to take any man at the worst. — There are *incident offences*. Sometimes things fall out so crossly, that one could not have imagined. Tho' the thing might be well intended, yet it may happen for the worse. — There are *ordinary mistakes* ; sometimes of *the things* (in taking one thing or another :) sometimes of the *agent's* part, and sometimes of the *patient's* side. We ourselves are often mistaken ; and we acknowledge it, and say we would not have done *this* or *that*, if we had once thought, or imagined, as things are fallen out. Therefore, we must give allowance, when men *mistake*. — There are *sudden apprehensions*, which should be allowed for. Some are too quick, and conceit, before they have duly weighed, and considered ; and, 'tis a hard matter, to rectify a misconceit. *Job's* friends failed, at first. They were rash in their first apprehensions, and therefore they ran on, in their severity, censure, and harsh dealings, till God interposed. Therefore, take heed of the first stumble, for, 'tis *ominous* : or, at best, *a good step is lost*. He is a



230 *The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit.*

person very ingenuous, that, upon shewing, will vary from his first thoughts ; for, if once men have taken up an ill opinion, 'tis hard to satisfy them : by reason of which, many men run on in an error, and pursue their first fault.

These are considerations that I offer, for *fair and equal consideration, one of another* : for *mutual patience, and fair allowance*. And these things never were, but in this fixed frame and temper of spirit, recommended in the *text*.

But, now on the other hand : there are some persons that are always murmuring, complaining, and finding fault : never pleased themselves, nor, pleasing others : that either are *provoking*, or *provoked* ; both which are to be condemned. I will not provoke, because I will leave no body less himself than I found him ; he shall not be so much the worse for my company and acquaintance : I will not be provoked, because I will not disorder myself, nor lose the composure of my own mind ; than which, nothing *without me* can be more valuable.

There seems to be an enmity to peace and quietness in some dispositions. These are malicious and turbulent spirits ; whose pleasure is, to make disturbance : who were never taken with *the beauty of order*, nor ever tasted *the sweet of peace*, nor framed themselves to *duty*, and *obedience*. What should such do in heaven, where all is order, and harmony ? They are only fit for the infernal hurry ; company for fiends and devils, whom they exactly resemble. In hell is *darkness, perplexity, confusion*. They lead a hellish life, who always are *quarreling, contradicting,*

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*traducing.* Yet, some applaud themselves in this, And, can they delight in the presence of a good and merciful God, of a compassionate Saviour in the harmony of a heavenly quire, who have not been acquainted with charity, nor exercised in love, and good-will? No. They will not relish such *company* nor endure their *employment*. They must, first, be discharged of their malignity, altered in temper, reconciled to righteousness, naturalized to things of the heavenly state, before that place can make them happy. For, *place, condition, and employment*, unsuitable to *disposition*, are burdensome, and cannot afford content or satisfaction: since to hearts ease and settlement, all things must be proportionable, and accommodate. They flatter themselves greatly; they grossly cheat, and abuse themselves, who think of admittance into God's blissful presence hereafter, or into the society of blessed angels, and glorified souls, whose minds are not, in this preparatory state, discharged of *selfishness* and *partiality*, which make men *importune, troublesome, and very unpleasing company*. For, the pleasures of eternity, are mental and intellectual, delightful, and satisfactory, without *molestation, or contest*.

Man, is, in a sort, *felo de se*, by harbouring displeasure in his breast. He makes himself uneasy, by evil surmises, and discontents. If one designed to do a man the greatest mischief imaginable, one would contrive to raise in him *jealousy* and *suspicion*; to beget in him *malice, ill-will, displeasure*; provoke him to *envy*, and to *malign* others: he will, then lead the life of a fiend of darkness. The malignity of his  
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own breast will more corrode him, than the sharpest humours that can infest the body,

It lies upon every one, to study himself, to rectify his own temper; and where, by constitution, we are inclined to that which reason, or religion cannot approve; there, care is to be taken, to amend such inclination, and to govern it by rules of virtue: as one replied, when a physiognomer reported him vicious in several instances: "Thus (said he) I am, by bodily constitution: but, by the power of my mind, these things are subject to my reason." 'Twere a reproach to a man, if a physiognomer, by viewing his countenance, or an astrologer, by casting his nativity, should tell *what he is*, in respect of the principles of his mind; or *what he will do*, upon a moral account. If so, what effect is there of principles of reason? of grounds of religion and conscience? of measures of virtue, and rules of prudence? — If by study, exercise, and good use of himself, man be not better than when he came at first into the world; if there be neither improvement, nor refinement; what effect is there of christianity?

Now, I do purposely challenge, as enemies to christianity, *peevishness, frowardness, mal-contentedness*, which are the more dangerous evils, because men warrant themselves in them; supposing there is cause for their discontent, and that they are justifiable in it. So *Jenab*, (*chap. iv. ver. 9.*) *I do well to be angry.* This is the case of *ungoverned minds*, and *choleric constitutions*.

Those who transgress in their rage and fury; when they return to themselves, and to the use of so-

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ber reason, either find cause to be ashamed, and to wish they had kept in better compass (which is the recovery of *good nature*, or *virtue*;) or else, lose themselves upon this occasion, and become more immodest, and unreasonable, and more settled and confirmed in naughtiness. For, *good nature*, and the effects of it, in man, are the *soil* wherein the seeds of *virtue* being sown, will grow and thrive. But, let a man degenerate into hard heartedness, or cruelty; *virtue* becomes a stranger to such a constitution. We have woful examples *what monsters of rational agents on a moral account*, some men become, by unnatural use of themselves; wrought quite off, from all ingenuity, candor, sweetness; unlike themselves, what they were formerly known to be. There are indeed many ways of miscarrying; for, there are *soils of vices*: but, if a man would at once spoil his nature, raze his very foundation, and absolutely indispose himself to all acts of virtue; let him allow himself in *frowardness*, *peevishness*, *mal-content*; let him conceive *displeasure* in his breast; let him bear *ill-will*, live in *envy*, *malice*, and *out of charity*, 1 John iv. 8. For, since *God is love*, this temper is most abhorrent to him. So as that *he only can dwell in God, who dwells in love*, ver. 16.

By *discomposure of mind*, a person is unfit to attend upon God, and incapable of enjoying him. The mind that doth contemplate God, must be *God-like*. 'Tis only the *quiet and serene mind* that can contemplate God, and enjoy him: for, God will not dwell where violence and fury is. We read that *God was not in the fire, nor in the whirl-wind, nor in the earthquake*, but, *in the still voice*, 1 Kings xix. 11. And,



234 *The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit.*

And, as we are not fit to attend upon God, nor to enjoy *him* ; so likewise, not to enjoy *ourselves*. In such a temper, we have not the free use of our reason, nor any true content. For, what is all the world to a troubled and discomposed mind ? Therefore, give me *serenity* of mind, *calmness* of thought : for, these are better enjoyments than any thing *without us*. Therefore, for *these* things, will I daily praise God : ——— for upholding the foundation of *reason* and *understanding*, which are so much in danger, by the distemper of the mind : ——— for continuing me in the privilege of *liberty* and *freedom* (for, hereby I can present God with a *free-will-offering*, and bring unto him *the consent of my mind* :) and, for giving me *power* of *self-enjoyment*, and of *taking content in myself*. One may have much in the world *as to right and title* ; and yet, have nothing *as to power of self-enjoyment*. For, in the case of misgovernment, by lust, passion, and self-will ; we dispossess ourselves of *ourselves*, and all that we may call ours.

'Tis a sinful temper, to be *hard* to please ; and *ready* to take offence. It is grievous to those about us : and we shall soon suffer for it : for, men will soon withdraw from *unquiet* and *turbulent* spirits. Solomon hath observed, that he that would have a *friend*, must behave himself *friendly*, Prov xviii. 24. But, these men are unacceptable every where ; especially to those that are *under them* (for, as for *equals*, and *superiors*, they will soon withdraw :) but every good man will take care of *those that are under him*. And, upon this head, I shall observe *three or four* things.

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*First*, That we ought to make the lives of all those that live with us, as happy, and comfortable as we can, and their burdens as easy as may be. Let our advantages be never so much above theirs, and our power over them never so great ; yet, we should equally consider things, and do as we would be done unto, if in their circumstances.

Consider also, that things may as well be done with *gentleness*, and by *fair means*, as otherwise : and, that things that are *so* done, are done with pleasure and satisfaction, and will better hold : For, things that are done by *force*, and *with offence*, will no longer last than *that force* continues.

There is more *care to please* ; when men are not captious, peevish, froward, or easy to take offence. Men that are often *angry*, and for every trifle, in a little time, will be little regarded ; and so lose the advantage of giving *grave reproof*. They will say, '*'tis the manner of the person* ; and, *no one can help it* : and so these persons will be less considered, when they reprove with reason. *Displeasure* (when there is weighty reason for it) may prove to the offender a principle of reformation and amendment : but, hasty and passionate men, are not considered. Their fury is looked upon as a clap of thunder : and no one will much regard it.

Take notice what *care* God hath taken, for the *welfare* and *happiness* of those that are *inferiors*, and *under the power of others*.——The parent *must not provoke his children to wrath*, Eph. vi. 4. Parents that have all authority over their children, must take care how they use it.——*The husband must not be bitter*

236 *The excellence of a meek and quiet spirit.*

ter against *his wife*. He must give her no harsh language ; but give honour to her as the weaker vessel ; 1 Pet. iii. 7. Masters must render to their servants that which is just and equal : forbearing threatnings ; knowing that they have a master in heaven, Eph. vi. 9. Then for those that labour for us, that are but for a day, and are gone again ; God hath required, that their wages be paid them : otherwise their cry will come up, into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth, James v. 4. Then, for strangers, that are without friends, relations, or acquaintance ; what care doth God take for them ? Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, Heb. xiii. 2. Then for the widow, and the fatherless persons, that are most helpless ; what care hath God taken for them ? So great, that he will be revenged on those that wrong them, Exod. xxii. 22, 23, 24. and, on the contrary, will reckon those to have pure religion and undefiled, that shall visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction, James i. 27.

This is the rule. *The lower any one's condition is, in the world ; by so much the more he is pitiable ; and so much the greater care should we take, to ease him : he having burden enough upon him, without any other addition to his misery.*

I will conclude this discourse with *three rules*. Whosoever will do his work, with fair words ; I would not have him chide into it. I would never blame any one, for common incidencies, such as might befall myself, or any one else : nor ever blame any one, for not doing *that*, wherein he had not particular direction. — You will say, these are low things, to be spoken in a pulpit. But, let them be as low as they will :

will ; the *disorder of our minds*, many times, is occasioned for want of them : And, great disquietness is occasioned in many families, for want of that *peaceable temper*, which my *text* speaks of.

## DISCOURSE LXXXIV.

The effect, intent, and issue of religion.

P S A L M. xviii. 21, 22, 23.

*For I have kept the ways of the Lord : and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me : and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him : and I kept myself from mine iniquity.*

**I** Am now to give you an account of the *effect* and *demonstration* of religion in the subject. If we would not be imposed upon, let us take just measures. The *text* tells us, what judgment we are to make of religion, and *religious persons* : and by it, we may learn how to guide ourselves with judgment, in a matter of the highest nature. *viz.* if we proceed by the rule which in the schools we call *a demonstration by the effect* ; which I take to be the best : as for instance, if you come to prove there is a God ; the best account is *from the effect* ; prove the *cause*, from the *effect* : prove the *being of a God*, from the world that he hath made, and is his work : so prove religion, from



from its operation ; a religious person, from what he does. And this is the way which our Saviour hath taught us : *a good tree bringeth forth good fruit, &c. Mat. vii. 17.* For, we are in great danger of making false judgment, both concerning *persons* and *things*. This we often find, that the world esteems a person of a pleasant humour, and that hath a good assurance, a good put-off, and value for himself ; especially if he be a man of a ready wit ; and, that such a man shall meet with respect and reputation much above what there is ground for ; and more a great deal than those that are of far greater worth, of higher improvements, and better spirits. Thus are men esteemed, not so much from *integrity* and *simplicity* ; not from *pureness of mind*, and *exact walking*, according to the difference of *good* and *evil* ; but as they comply with several mens *fancies* and *opinions*.

Now, I will make use of my *text*, to describe, and lay out *a truly good man* ; one that is *real* in his religion ; one that *keeps the ways of the Lord, &c.* and that *keeps himself from his iniquity*. And, the better to explain myself, I must observe to you in the first place, a different state of men ; *a state of wickedness and sin*, when evil prevails : and *a state of religion*, when goodness and virtue take place. And these two differ, in degree, as *heaven* and *hell*. (For it is a great mistake for us to think, that all of heaven, or hell, is *hereafter* ; for both *the one*, and *the other*, is, in measure and degree begun *here*. For, *heaven*, and *hell*, are not so much *a place*, as *a state*. They that are reconciled to God, in the frame and temper of their minds, and that live according to the law of heaven,

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the everlasting and immutable rules of goodness, righteousness, and truth ; may truly be said to *have begun heaven while they are upon earth*. But, they who confound the difference of good and evil ; and who care not to approve themselves to God ; but *do without difference or distinction* : these are *partakers of the devilish nature* ; and are *in the hellish state*.)

There may be weaknesses, failings, mistakes, misapprehensions, some errors in judgment and opinion ; there may be false conceits, in some things, about religion ; and all these, *within the state of religion* ; where men are substantially honest, and mean *God, goodness, and truth* ; and live in all good conscience towards God. We read (*Genesis xx.*) how God did apologize for *Abimelech*, though he was not altogether without fault : for, he ought to have taken more care : but yet he was innocent, as to *the great transgression*, *Psal. xix. 13.* and, therefore, God saith, *I know thou didst it in the integrity of thy heart*. So *St. Paul* doth alleviate his persecution of the saints, *Acts xxvi. 9.* *I thought that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*. And, *1 Tim. i. 13.* he saith, *he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly, and in unbelief*. Therefore we must conclude, that none of those things that I have named, come within the compass of *wickedly departing from God* : but, all those that are sincere in their religion, may yet say, *I have kept the ways of the Lord, &c.* And thus it is reported of those good men and women that are upon record in holy scripture. *Zechariah* and *Elizabeth* are both said to *walk in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, blameless*, *Luke i. 6.*

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Neither is this particular *to them*; but unto *all good men*. This is the testimony of all the worthies in the old testament, *that they walked before the Lord in integrity*. And, this is *religion*, not in the *notion* only, and in *speculation*, but in *power* and in *truth*. Wherever it is *less*, or *otherwise*, it is with a *double heart*, not with a *whole heart*, as you read, *Psal. xii. 2.* So in *St. James*, we read of a *double minded man*, *Jam. iv. 8.* Religion is not satisfied with a bare profession and partial reformation. This may be for other ends and purposes; and not out of love to God, and righteousness. But, we must harmonize with the nature, mind and will of God; and find a displacency and animosity in our souls, against evil: and this, *from the love of righteousness and goodness*. And, therefore, to bring *this* home, being a matter of the greatest consequence, even *that* by which we must stand or fall: I will tell you that this *text* is not verified, in any of these *cases*.

*First*, In the case of *fundamental ignorance*.

*Secondly*, In the case of great *negligence* and *carelessness*.

*Thirdly*, In the case of *voluntary consent to known iniquity*.

I. It cannot be verified in the case of *fundamental ignorance*. I call it *fundamental ignorance*, in answer to *fundamental knowledge*. For, there is a *knowledge* necessary to make a man *good*. I will not take upon me to determine the *least* that may be: but this is certain; there is *some* degree of knowledge necessary to make a man *good*. Therefore, to instance in *two* things that are *fundamentally necessary* to religion and conscience.

conscience. 1st, To know *that there is a God*; and that we all ought to reverence, adore, and worship him. God hath *made* men to know, that *he is*; and, if they know that *he is*, they must know, that they ought to reverence, adore, and worship him. 2dly, They must have knowledge of *those great crimes* which are against God's honour; which are *against the state of a creature*; and *unworthy in respect of God*. And, this knowledge I hold *fundamental*, and *indispensible*; and must be, wherever there is a capacity. And from *this* I can excuse none but *infants*, and *idiots*; that are not come to the use of reason, or are deprived of it. All else may know that there is a God, and may know *the great instances of evil*, such as *murder, adultery, blasphemy, perjury*, and the like. I might add a *third* instance; which yet I do not mention with the like evidence as the former; to wit, *that there will be rewards and punishments in the next world*: that God will sooner, or later, judge the world, and controul the wickedness of it, and reward eminent virtue, and goodness. Such a belief as this, tho' it be not *equally knowable* to the other two; yet it is knowable, and is necessary for the encouraging of virtue, and discouragement of vice, and wickedness. This is the *first* thing. Those that are ignorant of the things that are *fundamentally necessary to religion*, cannot say *that they have kept the ways of the Lord*; and *have not wickedly departed from God*. For, these have *wickedly departed from him*; altho' they have no more than *natural knowledge*; and those *principles*, with which at first, God created *man*. For, these things are manifest to all men: and *all men* are



242 *The effect, intent, and issue of religion.*

*a law unto themselves* in these matters. And, therefore, *the apostle saith, that God is not far from every one of us, Acts xvii. 27. and that the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, and those things that he hath made, Rom. i. 20.* So that they who deny his *eternal power and godhead, are without excuse.*

II. They who are greatly *careless and neglective* of God, cannot say *that they have kept the ways of the Lord, &c.* For, *two things are absolutely necessary to the state of religion ; and wherein we ought to take great care ; to wit, judgment of right, and conscience to do accordingly.* The judgment of what is *right and wrong ; true, and false ; good, and evil ;* do require great care, diligence, and pains. Nay, let me ask you, what there is in the whole life of man that is valuable, or worthy, but doth require *care, pains, industry, and diligence ?* Go over the several employments of the world. The *husbandman* plows, and sows, and doth every thing necessary to his land, before he expects a crop. Take the *merchant* in the way of his trade ; he walks from *east to west*, and sends his goods far and near, for the increase of his *wealth*. What diligence and care do men take, to preserve *life*, and to maintain themselves in *health and strength*, and provide for their *families ?* to get an *estate*, and to keep it ? We see, in every thing that is to be done for the concerns of this life, there is *care and caution* to be used. And, shall there be no *care, no pains, no diligence, nor industry* used, to govern our *faculties ; to moderate our appetites, for the several uses and purposes of religion, which is of the highest*

highest concernment of all others ? Wherefore, in the first place, *to the state of religion*, and in order to uphold and maintain the same ; there must be care taken, to discern the difference between *good* and *evil* ; *true* and *false* ; *right* and *wrong*. For these are the great points of religion. At the knowledge of these, religion *begins*. And this is every body's charge, according to his capacity, opportunity, and ability. And this is as necessary to preserve us from *cheats* and *impostures*, as to know our *liberty*. Our first work is to establish in ourselves *a throne of judgment*, thoroughly to know and understand our duty, and what is to be done, what to be avoided : and, then, in point of *practice* and *choice*, to observe this difference. And, if this be not done, our religion is to little purpose. For it comes all to one ; *not to make any difference in things*, or *not to observe that difference*. The *first* thing in religion, is, to refine a man's temper : and the *second*, to govern his practice. If a man's religion do not this, his religion is a poor slender thing, and of little consideration : 'tis then, only a naked profession, and fit to give him a denomination. I say, such a man's religion is but of little value : for, it hath no efficacy, but, falls short of the very *principles* of nature. For *they* do certainly and constantly attain their several effects. The sun, the moon, the stars ; fire, air, earth, and water ; these never fail to act *according to their several principles*, and to attain their several effects. The sun, hath not failed for six thousand years, insomuch, that we are surer of its rising and setting, than we are of ourselves. Now, shall all *the principles in inferior nature*

244 *The effect, intent, and issue of religion.*

throughout the whole creation, regularly, constantly, and certainly attain their effects ? And, shall there be only a failure in *the principles of reason, and religion* ?——But to proceed.

III. Whosoever doth *voluntarily consent to known iniquity* ; I am sure, this *text* cannot be verified of such a person. Men that do wittingly, and willingly consent to that which their judgment tells them, at that time, is *evil*, are represented in scripture as *sinning with a high hand, and with a stiff neck, and to resist the holy spirit* ; and to commit the great transgression, Jer. xvii. 23. Acts vii. 51. Psal. xix. 13. Now, of these, *the first* sort never made any entrance into religion. As for *the second*, if they do any thing worthy of religion, 'tis rather by chance, than of choice. As for *the third*, they pass into a clean contrary state.

The *first* of these, to wit, *those that are fundamentally ignorant*, they stumble at the very threshold ; because *religion*, in every degree, begins at *some measure of knowledge* ; for, can a blind man judge of colours ? No more can a man that is *fundamentally ignorant* be said to be *religious*. —— And, as for those that are greatly *careless, and neglective* ; it is uncertain what they will do, that do not act by rule, and upon consideration. —— But, as for *the third sort* ; those that give their *consent to that which is evil*, these pass into the *contrary state*, and take a course to root out of their minds the very seeds of goodness that were sown : for, *so*, contrary acts are apt to do. No *habit* doth absolutely determine the act, tho' it doth greatly dispose and incline to the action. Yet a *habit* may be utterly lost. If a man do, for a long time  
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forbear all *acts* of religion, he is wanting to that which should continue *the habit*. And, if there be *contrary acts*, the *contrary habit* will be begun; and the more they are, the more will the contrary disposition be increased. So that, in time, the *habit of virtue* shall not only be weakened, but wholly wrought out, and the contrary habit brought in.

This is the course of things in nature. Every habit begun, is greatly weakened by a bare forbearance of acts; for, every thing must be conserved in the way it was produced. A *disposition* is first introduced by some acts: and, if you do not introduce act upon act, the disposition will fail. For, things that are not brought to a *state* of perfection, will return back again, if they be not maintained in the same way that they were produced. Therefore, the *towardliness* of some persons to virtue, is, by intermission of acts, abated: and, when they come to put forth contrary acts, it is quite expelled. And this is the ground and foundation of *Achitophel's* counsel to *Absalom*, 2 Sam. xvi. 21. He bids him do a lewd act that he might be confirmed in his wicked design he had against his father. Therefore, let us close with that good advice which *Jesus*, the son of *Syrach* gives, *Eccles. xxi. 2. Flee from sin, as from a serpent.*

The least that can be expected from religion, and conscience to God, is, that by means thereof, men be kept from giving their *consent to known iniquity*, and be enabled to escape the pollutions of the world. If the creation below us, by their natural *instinct*, always do those things that are regular, and attain their end: shall not these *higher principles of reason*



246 *The effect, intent, and issue of religion.*

and *understanding* do the like, and always preserve us from known *evil*, and determine us to that which is *morally good*? The principle of reason, knowledge, and judgment, is the highest principle, and transcendent to all others. The principle by which the sun doth enlighten the world, is not to be put in competition with *the reason of mind and understanding*: to which if we add, the aid of *God's grace*, which doth never fail, (for he doth *prevent us* with his *grace*;) it is a shame and reproach to us, if we *vary* from the rule and measure of virtue; *sin* against our own light and conscience: and *do worse*, when we *know* better.

I shall now proceed to declare the *purpose* and *intent* of religion: *what* it aims at, and *how* it doth affect the *subject*. And that I will do, in these particulars.

I will consider religion, *in its motion towards God*: — What it doth *in the person* in which it is: — how it appears, and carries itself towards others, even to *the whole creation*; but more especially, towards *them* with whom we daily converse: — how religion stands affected towards the things that are *without us*, or *about us*; either the *necessaries*, and *conveniencies*, or *superfluities* of life: — and what religion doth, when it is *finally victorious*, and overcomes the world.

Of these I shall treat; but not severally, and distinctly. Nor will I undertake to give you a particular account of these, in the order I have now laid them; for, *this* would be, to make *this text* the whole *bible*. I will therefore speak of them in conjunction,

as things offer themselves ; because these things run one into another.

Religion makes us live up to our *highest faculties*, so as becomes rational beings, that are endued with intellectual nature. It enables us to live and to act suitably to our height and excellency, so as to keep up *the grandeur* of our being ; as *those* that bear the image of *the immortal God*, and are exalted above the inferior creation ; as those that represent *him* in the world, not only in respect of *intelligence*, but, in respect of *authority*, and *power*, to dispose, and govern. It makes us to scorn all actions that are base, unhand-some, or unworthy our state, and the relation we stand in, to God.

To have *God* in our sight, and, to have right apprehensions of *him*, doth, above all things, tend to the *nobleness*, *amplitude*, and *freedom* of our spirits ; for, *this* we observe, that *the greatness of an object*, and *the excellency of the act of any agent about a transcendent object*, doth mightily tend to *the enlargement and improvement of his faculties*. Whereas, those who are employed in mean businesses, and are conversant about *little objects*, have nothing in them that is excellent, but are of limited and narrow spirits. It hath been observed, that men that have been of mean parts, and ordinary perfections, after they came to be *truly religious*, their *parts* have grown upon them, and they have appeared to be other kind of men. The account of this is easy : it is to be imputed to their application to *God* (who is the noblest *object* in the world) and to their attendance upon *him*. For, there is no motion in the world so generous, and  
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tending to the accomplishing *the agent*, as the motions of *religion* are.

By our religion, we are preserved from those things that would sink us into the order of beasts, by *sensuality*, and *carnal-mindedness* : or that would transform us into the likeness of devils, by *pride*, *presumption*, and *self-conceit*. By religion we come to imitate the divine perfection ; become *God-like*, in wisdom, righteousness, goodness, charity, compassion ; in forgiving injuries, pardoning enemies, and doing *hurt* to none, but *good* to all, as we have ability and opportunity.

Religion doth restrain the extravagancy of mens *passions* and *appetites*, and regulates the exorbitancy of mens *wills*.——It is the most conducive instrument in the whole world, to the pleasure of mind, and body. Our misery and infelicity ariseth from our undue and naughty practice. And all that which we call *punishment* is let in upon us, by sin. Religion permits us the pleasure of our body, as far as it is for our health, and not destructive of the tranquility of our mind, nor the indolency of the body. —— Religion produceth a sweet and gracious temper of mind ; *calm* in itself, and *loving to men*. It causeth an *universal benevolence* and *kindness* to mankind. For these are the things of which it doth consist : *love*, *candour*, *ingenuity*, *clemency*, *patience*, *mildness*, *gentleness*, and all other instances of *good-nature*. It hath such a quality in it, as will make them *good-natured*, that it finds *bad*. Religion makes men *humble*, *affable*, *meek* and *charitable* ; *modest*, and *prudent* ; *tender*, and *compassionate*. It detests nothing more than ei-  
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ther a peevish, froward, passionate, furious, or troublesome temper ; a morose, or churlish disposition.

Religion begets in us *a true liberty, freedom of spirit, and largeness of soul.* It causeth the greatest serenity and chearfulness to the mind ; and prevents groundless fears, foolish imaginations, needless suspicions, and dastardly thoughts. It takes away from us all bad thoughts of *God*, or jealous suspicions of *men*. Religion makes us not suspect evil from *God*, but to look upon him as the most gracious and benign being, that designs nothing more than the happiness of his creatures. It is not *religion*, but *superstition* that dreads *God* : religion makes us reverence him, and delight in him. It makes us to entertain good thoughts of *God*, and to conceive aright of him : that he doth transact all things with mankind, *as a loving and tender father with his child*, Mal. iii. 17.

I further add, that *religion* advanceth the soul to its just power and sovereignty ; enabling the mind to govern all bodily appetites, and exorbitant desires : and this, not only because of the *intrinsic baseness* of brutish and sensual lusts, in a nature that is endued with transcendent faculties ; but also, because of the *mischievous effects* that follow upon it. *Intemperance* doth, by a natural necessity, weaken our reason, and thwart the very end and purpose of religion. For, intemperance doth either *stupidify*, or *enrage* our spirits. We see, sometimes, that persons of a good constitution, well inclined to virtue, fair, and conversable, whose company is pleasant and delightful ; that these very persons are made cholerick, and ungovernable, when they are disordered by intemperance :  
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and so they are not what they were ; but emptied of all those things to which their constitutions did lead and incline them. Our work, therefore, in the world, is to maintain the *just authority* and *sovereignty* of *reason*, against the assaults of rude, intemperate, and boisterous passions : and, so to tame *that rude beast the body* (which, by the divine providence, is tied to our *souls*, in this state) that it may not prove a constant temptation, and provocation to our mind ; but, that it be kept in subjection.

I add further ; that religion is a most *lively, vigorous* and *sprightly* thing ; satisfying to the *subject*, and putting it upon all good employment. Worldly men, persons of no experience, may think otherwise : as that *religion* would make a man *morose*, and *sour*, and fill him with *discontent*. Whereas, religion drives away *sad* and *gloomy melancholy*, and begets in us a *rational confidence* ; and gives a man great *joy*, and *pleasure*, in the divine goodness. And, if any that are religious, think otherwise, and are otherwise affected ; I must tell them, that it doth not arise from *principles of religion*, but, from *bodily temper* (in respect of which they are troubled ; ) or, from some occasion *from without* : and, that their religion is *their relief*.——Of all the things in religion, none is so much suspected to tend to melancholy and sadness, as is the motion of *repentance*. So that if I can vindicate this piece of religion, you will be satisfied for all the rest. But, to think that this is accompanied with *sadness* and *melancholy*, is the greatest mistake in the world. True indeed, *worldly sorrow*, as the apostle saith, *causeth death*, 2 Cor. vii 10. This hath no life in it, be-  
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cause it hath no respect to God ; but, is rather an act of rebellion against him : for, *here*, the unquietness comes from *want of submission to God*. The person is discontented, because things are not to his mind, and as he would have them. Such was the temper of *Jonah*, *Jonah* iv. 9. he was displeased, and angry to death, because he was not gratified, and had his will ; tho' it tended never so much to the ruin of others. But, the ground of *sorrow for sin*, is, *the love of God* ; it is *because we have done amiss, varied from the rule of right, and given God an offence* ; because we have done that which was base, and disingenuous to our loving father, and best benefactor. Now, this doth quite alter the case, and makes a change ; *which worldly sorrow*, tho' never so much, doth not. For, if we truly repent, we undo the action, and morally disclaim it : and, upon this, God doth pardon. But, *things without*, are not altered by *worldly sorrow*, but go on, as they did, in their course ; whether the man be pleased, or displeased. But, *repentance* doth afford us *heart's ease* and removes the malady that did affect us : for, *by our repentance, and God's pardon, that which hath been done, is, as if it never had been done* : so that in effect, *the penitent* may say ; *I, that was the sinner, am not the same person. And, that which I have done amiss, is, as if I had never done it.* This is that *repentance* which the apostle calls *repentance to salvation, never to be repented of*, 2 Cor. vii. 10. For it produceth good effects : *love to God and thankfulness to him* : and in *these*, there is heart's ease and satisfaction. I will appeal to the experience of any man that hath ingenuously repented, if he do not find more satisfaction,

252 *The effect, intent, and issue of religion.*

satisfaction, heart's ease and pleasure, in one hour that he has spent *in this exercise*, and in *retirement from the world*, than ever he found in any hour of *jollity* and *intemperate mirth* in all his life. And it must be so. For, in *one case*, there is satisfaction *to the reason of the mind*, which is fundamental to inward peace : but *in the other*, the pleasure of the sin is soon over, and the memory of it is grievous, and remains. All that pleasure which worldly and ungoverned persons take in *sin*, has no solidity in it : but, we may truly say of it, as Solomon doth of *laughter* ; *it is madness*, and of *mirth*, *what doth it ?* Eccl. ii. 2. But in the motion of *repentance*, there is ease to a man's heart. So that a man may say of this sorrow, what the poet saith of *grief* ; *that it is carried out with the tears*.

I have now spoken of *religion* in its *use* and *exercise*, in this state, whilst we are *here* ; the *advantages* that we have by it *at present*. I am now to speak of it, in its *issue* ; when it is victorious and triumphant ; what it shall be in souls, when they have made their escape out of time, and finally conquered the world.

And here I shall declare the effects of religion, partly as to mens *bodies*, but chiefly as to their *minds* : as to mens *bodies*, in *this state*, and the *future*.—— In *this state*, the greatest work is *mortification*. Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members, &c.* And, 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I beat down my body.* And, 1 St. John ii. 16. The apostle saith, *All that is in the world the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life must be subdued.*—— Then, *hereafter*, our bodies shall be *spiritualized*. 1 Cor. xv. 44. *Nay, Though it be sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body :*

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*body* : which would pass for nonsense, in the ears of a philosopher : but he speaks *emphatically*. A body carried so much higher, and to so great a degree of perfection ; as much as a *spirit* is a far more excellent being than an *earthly body*. This that I now speak, we cannot *now* fully understand, because it is a state *in reversion*. For, we must know, that states are not known by *notion* and *description*, but by *sense* and *feeling*, and by being in the very state itself. Beasts have no notion of *the state of men* ; neither have *we* any certain notion of the state of *angels*, because neither *they*, nor *we* are in that state. And as we do not know it, because we feel it not ; so can we do nothing towards this happy change of the body, otherwise than by the several *virtues* and *graces*, in these bodies (to wit, in the exercise of *sobriety*, *chastity*, *temperance*, together with the *moderate use* of the conveniences and accommodations of nature) by which we may fit and prepare them for *the state of glory*.

But our main work, in this state, is about the *inward man* ; to wit, that *that* be so conformable to the law of God, that it be brought *to take delight* in it, and *to harmonize* with it. We must take care that we do not make our highest faculties *to cater for the flesh*, Rom. xiii 14. The inferior faculties are capable of this employment, and good enough for it. Our great care must be, to subdue all inordinate passions and boisterous lusts, which are said *to fight against the soul*. That gallant resolution which was taken up by the apostle, must be taken up by us : *I will not*, saith he, *that any of these things have authority*



ty over me, 1 Cor. vi. 12. But I will have my mind free from, and above all these things. Let us take care that all inordinate appetites and excesses be restrained ; such as that was in her, who said, *give me children else I die*, Gen. xxx. 1. For *will, without reason* is a blind man's motion : and *will against reason*, is a mad man's motion. ——— I add, that our care must be, that we be not only *bodily-wise*. *Body* indeed is a *heavy weight* ; but, let us bear up, as well as we can against it. 'Tis true, that God hath linked our *souls* and *bodies* together : but it was always intended that *the governing part* should be *the mind*. And, a man, by *wisdom* and *virtue*, may overcome *bodily temper* and *inclination*. We have had those that have said ; *by my bodily temper and constitution I am so and so ; such are my difficulties and temptations : yet, through the power of my mind, all these things are subject to my reason*. This is the creator's law ; that all things in man should be subject to the government of *reason* (which is God's *deputy* ; ) and this is our trial, in this state ; *whether* by the weight of body, we will suffer ourselves to be depress'd, and sink downward by minding earthly things, and so take our portion here, and fall short of God ; or, *whether* by the reason of our minds, we will mount upwards, mind heavenly things, converse with God by heavenly meditation, and make choice of the things that are most excellent, whereby we shall naturalize ourselves to the employment of eternity. For, this we observe, that we readily and easily do those things that we have been long accustomed unto. *Use* makes men ready, apt, and prompt. So that it is no difficult matter

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matter for men to foresee what they shall approve hereafter, by what they savour, relish and delight in now ; by what they take pleasure and satisfaction in, at present. For, it will be, there, *more of the same*. Therefore, our business in time, is to get the victory over those unreasonable passions which annoy us ; that so we may readily ascend into the state of intellectual being. Our business here, is to qualify our souls, by holiness and virtue, for the happiness of heaven, and to separate our minds from the dregs of matter, and bodily sense ; which will not be, till the mind get the victory, and the soul become God-like ; and, in some measure, partaker of the divine nature.— But, here, I might lose myself, and yet can speak but little of the happiness of that state. Let it be our care at present, to cleanse ourselves from all pollutions of flesh and spirit. For, can we be so blind as to think that a contrary way will bring us to our intended end ?

We do observe that things are in men, according to their temper. What is food, though never so wholesome, if a person be sick ? Or musick, to those that are melancholy ? What is exercise, or recreation, to men that are weak and feeble ? What are the things of the world to him that hath no power to enjoy them ? So it is in this case. They that take no delight in the exercise of virtue, in this state ; if, after this life, God should remove them into local heaven, they would take little satisfaction in the place, because of an unsuitable frame of spirit. For, men must be suitable to the object, in the enjoyment of which they receive satisfaction. Therefore, suppose (though it is impossible) that a man being unregenerate,

256 *The effect, intent, and issue of religion.*

rate, and not renewed in his spirit, nor refined in his temper ; that *God*, by power should remove such a man into heaven ; when he came thither he would not be satisfied either in the persons, or in the employment of *that place*, because all these would be contrary unto him. Tho' when we speak of heaven, we understand rather *a state*, than *a place* ; a frame and temper *within*, rather than any thing *without*. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that we should by goodness here, qualify and prepare ourselves for happiness *hereafter*. For, there is no happiness in the meeting of things that are unlike.

Thus now I have given you an account of *the state of religion*, and its operation upon *the body and the mind*, in *this state* and *the other*. And this is enough to recommend religion, and to make us to look upon it, not as an *arbitrary exaction*, but as a thing highly pleasurable, and most desirable : as that which is effectual to purify our natures, and to raise our minds ; as that which is the health and strength and good temper of our minds : for, as a man knows that he is in health, when the offices of nature are well performed and discharged ; so is he sure of his mind's health and strength, when all the several offices and duties of life are easily and well performed.

They are very little acquainted with *religion*, that look upon it as a *burden* ; as that which puts too great a *restraint upon human nature*, and upon *liberty*. And therefore, *the poet* \* wrote his book, to *release the minds of men from the obligation of religion*. I confess, he might well do so, as to that which he

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\* *Lucretius*.

called *religion* : for, *that* was to release the minds of men from those *unnatural obligations* their religion laid upon them. But no such thing can be said of *that religion* which we profess. For, the work of our religion is to teach men to avoid evil, and to do good. And this doth no more confine mens liberty, than for men to confine themselves within the measures of sobriety and temperance, and to avoid those things which would do them hurt and prejudice. No man thinks he is *under restraint*, if he be confin'd to eat and drink only those things that will do him good. For, if this were liberty and perfection *to do one thing as well as another* ; *evil*, as well as *good*, without difference or distinction ; then, let me ask you ; *where is God's liberty* ? From hence it would follow, that of all the world, *God* is most tied and bound ; that *he* (in whom there is *fulnefs of liberty*, having all *power*) is *most limited*. For, *God* saith of himself, that he *cannot* do evil ; that he doth *banish it from his throne*, and that he is *of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity*, Hab. i. 13. I conclude therefore, 'tis not *power*, but *weakness* ; not *perfection*, but *deformity*, for any one to be *able* to do otherwise than what is right and fit to be done. For this cannot be said of *God* himself. For, all the ways of *God*, are *ways of goodness, righteousness and truth*.

Now, the better to inforce what hath been said about religion, I will balance the two opposite *states* ; that which is founded *in religion*, and that which is founded *in evil and sin* : that by comparing both together, you may understand the one and the other. For, *contraries* are the best comments, one upon another.



258 *The effect, intent, and issue of religion.*

ther. And to this purpose, I will take into consideration, *these particulars.*

*First,* It doth not deserve the honourable title of religion, or to be taken for the effect of *respect to God,* or *conscience to right,* which doth not refine mens spirits, rectify their apprehensions, and regulate their actions. Even *nature's sense,* as depraved as it is, doth startle at any vile practice. For, nothing is more true, than that all evil is *against the nature of man,* till it is marred and spoiled by consenting to iniquity. For witness hereof, take *Hazael* as an instance, who startled at the mention of those sins which the prophet told him of; insomuch that he saith, *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do such things?* 2 Kings viii. 13. For, impudency, immodesty, and cruelty, are not, *primarily,* in the nature of man: but they are contracted by *base use, custom and practice.* Of wickedness there is no account to be given; either of *itself,* or of the *degree* of it: for, it is contrary to reason. And when the rule of right is once broken and violated, no man knows where a person will stay. — Let us consider the open declarations that are from God against *wickedness,* both by denunciation, and execution, *Rom. i. 18. Prov. i. 26.* 'Tis true, God oftentimes hath long patience with a wicked world, but it is in order to their repentance. Tho' men are very apt to misunderstand this compassion of God towards sinners. For it is observed, *Ecc. viii. 11.* *that because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are set to do mischief.* But yet, there is a *present recompence* of evil. For, *all inordinacy of mind,* carries

ries with it, *its own punishment*. All wickedness carries with it *uneasiness of spirit* and *dissatisfaction*.

Another thing that I would offer to your consideration, is, the malign nature of *evil*, and the dismal consequence thereof. For, it is that which poisons the nature of man ; and turns angels into devils. Man, which by nature, is a loving, mild, and gentle creature ; it makes *fierce*, and *cruel*. The world, which by the appointment of God, is a place habitable, and fit to live in ; it turns into a *wilderness of tygers*, and *savage creatures* ; for, the apostle saith, *Jam. iv. 1. Whence come wars and fightings ? Come they not from your lusts that war in your members ?* If it were not for the exorbitancy of mens spirits, and wickedness of mens hearts, and lives, it would be the better for every man, by how many the more men there were in the world : whereas, now, *many* men are formidable : and, a man runs a hazard, to run into *company*.

Another consideration is the unaccountableness of not revoking by repentance, *what* a man hath done amiss. For, this *second* evil is greater than the *first*. For, not to repent, is to justify the evil that hath been done, and to stand to it. For the first evil, something may be alledged ; to wit, ignorance, inadvertency, temptation, and the like : but, where men continue in evil, and do not revoke it by repentance, this tends to settle them in a wicked mind.—— It is our contracting guilt, and giving *God* an offence, by our carelessness, and consenting to iniquity, that is the cause of all that *trouble* and *perplexity* that befalls us. There is no foundation of internal peace, but in

*a conscience void of offence both towards God, and man.* He that carries guilt in his breast, hath *Tophet* burning within him. The conscience not eased by repentance, but under guilt, hath *horror* and *confusion*, which is *a hell*, on this side *hell*: I had almost said, *the worst of hell itself*. For, if to this we add, *the sense of God's offence*, you have the *hell of hell*. There is no pleasure or satisfaction either in life, or at the hour of death, but in living according to the dictates of right *reason*. For, this is the light of God, in men God's viceroy, or vicegerent, and *that* which is fundamental to conscience. So that if we approve ourselves therein, we shall not give God offence, nor wound our own spirits. And, for this, I dare refer myself to any man who hath not contracted reprobacy of mind, that these things *are so*. But, for *such* men, they can no more judge of the reality of *a state*, than men that are in a fever, can relish *food*.— This, in reality, may be defended against the whole world, *that there is nothing desirable, lasting, or satisfactory, but what is honest*. Nothing that is *base* or *vile*, can be *pleasant*. Good men, who are under the power of *reason* and *religion*, they are *free men*, and *happy*, in any condition, whether sick, or well; at liberty, or shut up: and, *bad men*, are *slaves* in the *best condition*: for, they are under the tyranny of their *lusts*, which are *tyrants*, and *usurpers*, that have no authority, nor any right to govern. The desires of *nature* are moderate; but, *the cravings of inordinate appetites* are neither to be resisted, nor satisfied. And, hence it comes to pass, that *virtue* is *antecedent to happiness*, and *vice*, to *misery*. It is *vice* and *wickedness* that fills a  
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man with uneasiness, disorder, doubtfulness, and irresolution. And *these* put a man besides himself, and out of the true use of reason, which doth represent God to man : so that he is even a mad man, that questions his being ; or that dares to give God an offence, by doing any thing that is evil. For, we account that *these two* go together ; *to know God, and the difference between good and evil, right and wrong.* And they that have apostatized from matters of revelation, yet have acknowledged, that there is belonging to the nature of man, an inclination to, and a persuasion of, *a divine being.* For, most certain it is, that the *mind* of man as to God, holds the same sufficiency and proportion, that *the eye* of man holds to *light* ; which if a man do but open, he cannot but see. So if a man do but use *reason*, he must see, and acknowledge God. The wise man tells us, that the *spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord*, Prov. xx. 27. A candle lighted by God, and serving to this purpose to discern and discover God. And, truly, were it not thus, wherein would consist the excellency of human nature, above the inferior nature ? What a contemptible creature were *man*, if he could not lift up himself above these worldly things ? Were it not thus, *life itself* were not greatly valuable. Take from man *this power and capacity* ; and there is nothing in the world for which a man would suffer pain or cold, or break his sleep. For, what is there in worldly drudgery ? We, often, have little more than *our labour for our travel* : — Now, this is my argument. If nature carry in it, *sense of Deity* ; and, if to the nature of man belong true notions of *the several perfec-*



tions that are in God (I mean his *moral perfections*, as *truth, goodness, purity, holiness*, and the like;) and that those who had no revelation from God, have arrived to a full satisfaction of *the existence of Deity*, and have had *sense of good and evil*, right and wrong; then they who fall short of the measures, fall under force and violence; and lay within themselves the foundation of uncertainty and distraction: because they have a *principle* within themselves, that doth reprove and challenge, countermand and controul. For, it is a great matter for a man to *approve himself to himself*, and to satisfy the reason of his own mind. How true is that of the prophet? Isa. lvii. 20. (which, also, is verified by *reason*) *there is no peace*, saith he, *to the wicked: but, they are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest*. Nothing is more true, than that if a man be guilty, and vary from *the rule of right*, and depart from *reason*, he wrongs himself, goes against his principle, and the law of his nature, shakes off his *governor*; therefore cannot have peace, or satisfaction. For, these things are in conjunction, and cannot be separated, *viz. innocency, and peace*; and, on the contrary, these go together, *guiltiness, and perplexity of thoughts*. And these things are not as men will, or as they order and choose; but, they are conjoined in *the nature of things themselves*. And these things being so, *religion* recommends itself, from its *usefulness*, and is not to be looked upon as an *imposition*, or a *burden* laid upon the nature of man; but ought to be a matter of *our delight and choice*.

But, then, *the last consideration* is *this*: that the perfection and happiness of human nature consists in  
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the right use of our rational faculties, and in the vigour and intense exercise of them, about their *proper* and *proportionable object*. And, what *object* can be more *proportionable* than *God* himself, the original of our *being* ? him from whom it did flow ? who is the *pattern* of all *excellency* and *goodness* ? If, therefore, we find not *rest*, and greater *satisfaction* in *him*, than in *all worldly pleasure and delight*, it is, because we have not exerted our *highest* and *noblest faculties* in that vigour which we ought, and should have done, or as we have done our *sensual appetites* ; but have suffered our *noble faculties* to be interrupted by bodily indisposition, or worldly pleasure, whence, they become untoward to things spiritual : whereas, if these faculties had been inured, as they should have been, we should have found more and more, that heavenly acts were become suitable, connatural and easy. Just as in persons that live a contemplative life, and delight in reading and meditation ; to these men it is ten thousand times more satisfaction, to be alone, or in company that will improve their understanding, than in any other business whatsoever. And, of such men it may be said, that they are never *less alone*, than *when alone*. This is the great privilege of men that lead contemplative lives, that they never want employment : when other men that sink down into sensuality, or that violate the peace of their own minds and consciences, are fain to seek the worst of company, that they may drive away their time. But, if we did exert our minds and understandings about *God*, and *heavenly things*, our souls would be so habituated, that upon all occasions they would, with great  
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264      *The effect, intent, and issue of religion.*

delight and freedom, without any averſation or backwardneſs, exerciſe themſelves in heavenly meditation. For, heavenly things are the greateſt truths and realities in the world ; and *our life is in them*. Whereas they that are drowned in ſenſual pleaſures are *dead* whiſt they *live*.—— This I account : that, in *morality*, we are as ſure as in *mathematicks*.—— God, in *infinite reaſon and wiſdom*, hath ſo contrived, that if an intellectual being ſink itſelf into ſenſuality, love of this outward world, or, any way deſile and pollute itſelf ; then, miſeries and torments, afflictions, and vexations ſhould befall it, *in this ſtate* ; this being the ſureſt way to reſcue, and recover a laſping and declining ſoul.

And, ſo, I have given you an account of the ſeveral particulars ; whereby you may underſtand, that *this* which the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, is a true representation of *the ſtate of religion*.

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## DISCOURSE LXXXV.

Men have nothing to glory of, but Religion.

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JEREMIAH ix. 23, 24.

*Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord,*

THE subject matter of these words being of great moment, the prophet is very exact, and lays it down two ways. 1. Corrective. 2. Directive.

1. By way of correction of what is false, unsound, and insincere : *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, &c.*

2. By way of direction, what is true, real, solid, substantial. *Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.* So that,

I. You have the false foundations of glorying, or of mens sitting down with satisfaction ; and here you have three excluded, and these comprehend all. 1. You have that which is nearest to us ; *mental endowments*, the good things of the mind. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom.* 2. You have that which is next ; *bodily perfection* ; the good things of the body.

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266 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

*Let not the mighty man glory in his might.* 3. That which is *about us*, external supplements and accommodations, the good things of *fortune*. *Let not the rich man glory in his riches.* For this is our condition ; thus we are made to be beholden to other things ; and though man was made after the image of God, constituted governor of the world ; yet he stands in more need of external accommodations and supplements, than any creature below him. And this is a man's perfection, that tho' in himself he be a weak feeble creature, and for a long time of his life hath only security that he is born into the arms of reason, and loving affection ; yet when he comes to the use of his reason, (that instrument which is alone his peculiar, and which is not visible to any external eye) the whole creation cannot deprive him of that which is his strength and excellency, and he makes them subservient to himself, as by experience in what we eat and what we drink, and wherewith we cloath ourselves, and wherewith we make defence.

II. Then for the solid foundation of glory and of satisfaction. *Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me ;* that he hath an inward and awakened sense of God in his soul, that he hath true judgment of God. For three things are peculiar to intellectual natures, and we are condemned if we fail in any of them. 1. To be perceptive of God, to feel and know there is a God ; *if by any means I may feel after God and know him*, saith St. Paul. 2. To conceive aright of him : and truly, if we do not that, we had better be ignorant of him, better

better not to know God, than to think of him amiss : for in the one case we do but neglect him, and in the other case we dishonour him. 3. Which is religion compleat in us ; to resemble and imitate him, and to be in our measure and degree, so far as he is communicable to us, what God is in his height, excellency and perfection. *This is to glory, that he doth understand and know me.* To know God, of whom three things are affirmed. (1.) That he doth deal graciously and favourably ; he knows our frame, he considers of what we are made. (2.) That he doth act according to the reason of the thing or the right of the case, which is called judgment. (3.) That he doth act, *secundum equitatem causæ*, that is, according to the equity of the case *i. e.* in righteousness, dealing according to what is just and fit. And this the scripture doth abundantly declare ; I will name you some places. *Psalms. lxxxix. 14. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne ; mercy and truth shall go before his face.* *Psalms. cxix. 156. Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord :* *Psalms. cxlv. 7. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.* *v. 8. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy ; v. 9. the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* God, when he did gratify Moses to admit him to the sight of himself, he made this proclamation, *gracious and merciful, full of loving-kindness, and of great mercy.*

In the III<sup>d</sup> place, you have in the words following the text, the assurance of these things, that God is in them certainly ; *for in these things I delight, saith the*

268 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

*the Lord.* Now this you must know ; that which is in a rational and intelligent nature with complacence, harmony and delight, and is a matter of choice, is more certainly there, than any natural quality is fixed to an inferior agent. So that the *sun* doth not more certainly shine, nor the fire more certainly burn ; heavy things do not more certainly descend by a principle of gravity, nor light things ascend by a disposition of levity, than an intelligent nature doth perform these things ; and they are there effectually, where an intelligent agent doth delight himself. So that do but consider this by the way : God is not formidable because of his omnipotence ; though he is not subject to the controul of the whole world, and his own power cannot be limited by any thing below him ; yet you may be assured that you cannot be hurt from thence : you are out of danger, because God takes pleasure and delight in judgment and loving-kindness.

Thus have you the sum of the words. So that here to speak to the point, *we are not to glory* : what that imports I will shew you. 1. Not in the good things of the *mind*. Now the perfections of the mind (I mean of the understanding) are these two, intelligence and prudence. These are the perfections of the understanding. 2. You are not to glory in *bonis corporis*, in the good things of the *body*. Now the good things of the body are two ; *health* and *strength*. 3. You are not to glory in the good things of *fortune* ; and they are two also ; *wealth* and *honour*. For *sapientia mentis* ; wisdom is a perfection of the mind : might is a perfection of the body ; riches

riches are the instruments of both ; for by wealth a man is enabled to exercise liberality, magnificence, and to do things that are either for the honour of God in the world, for the advantage of human society, or for the relief of the poor and those that are in necessity.

Thus comprehensive is the prophet, *let not the wise man glory*, &c. And pray take notice of four things : *first*, of the word, *glory*. *1st*. He doth not deny the things themselves to be good : for all those things that he instances in, are the gifts of God ; they are God's blessing upon us, for which God is to be thanked, and in the enjoyment of them he is to be acknowledged. *2dly*. He doth not disallow our having of them ; for we may say here, as St. Peter to Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 4. concerning his lands and his estate, *were they not in thy own power ?* There is no law that requires thee to alienate thy estate, nor art thou called upon to bring either part or all to the common stock of the church ; so that he was not challenged for having the land, neither did the apostle say it was his duty to alienate or to sell it ; but for lying to the Holy Ghost, for dissimulation ; an act of treachery and falsehood. *3dly*. He takes not away the use of these things, of none of them : for *Psalms* cxii. 5. *The good man guides and orders his affairs with discretion*, saith the *Psalmist* ; there is the use of wisdom ; and *Isa.* xxviii. 26. there the husbandman's skill is attributed to God's direction ; God directs him how to prepare his ground and to fit his seed for the soil. *Prov.* xxii. 3. *The prudent man foresees an evil and hides himself ; but the simple pass on and are punished.*



270 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

*punished.* 1 Chron. vii. 2. you have there an honourable mention of valiant persons and men of might. 1 Kings xv. 23. even kings that are not upon the whole matter approved, because they did not follow the Lord fully, yet the might that they did is commended. Eccl. v. 18, 19. *Behold that which I have seen ; it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink ; and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun, all the days of his life, which God giveth him : for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour ; this is the gift of God.* Eccl. vi. 1, 2. *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men ; a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it.* These men have the privilege of the horse and the ass, to carry all the day long a heavy load upon their backs, and at night to have it taken off from them, and they turned into the stable : they have power to see that so much is their own, but they have not command of what they have, neither have they power to do publick good, or to exercise acts of charity, nor to use themselves kindly. 4thly. He doth not deny advantage by these, Eccl. ii. 13. *Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.* And we are wont to say, it is better and safer for a man to be envied than pitied. For he that is envied hath wherewithal, by which he may subsist, and by which he may make his defence ; but a man may be pitied  
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and starved. And we are wont to say, *necessity makes men base*. Now by these four things it appears that the prophet excludes none of them : and this shews, *1st*. The folly of popish superstitious votaries. They tell us of three states of perfection ; the state of single life ; the state of poverty and beggary ; the state of regular, *i. e.* blind, obedience. I have but to do with one of these states, that is the state of poverty or beggary. There is nothing of merit in this state, there is nothing that recommends a man in this state to God, but the exercise of virtue, submission to the divine dispensations, patience and contentedness. It is a signal place, that of the apostle, *Col. ii. 23.* where, in a competition, he puts the satisfying of nature's desires, and prefers this before pinching and starving the body. Some think it is mortification, but they are mistaken ; *which things have indeed a shew of wisdom, in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.* The denying of a man's will, the keeping ourselves within the bounds of reason, that is perfection. To pretend to mortification by making a distinction between flesh and fish, by abstaining from flesh and drinking wine, these are cheats and impostures, there is nothing of religion in them. *2dly*. I also do observe all these four against that stinginess and envy of such as being in a lower state themselves, because they cannot otherwise satisfy their mal-content, malignity and envious dispositions towards those that are in a superior and better condition ; hold forth that despicableness, and being contemned in the world, think that that is religion : which is a cheat too :

272 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

too : and for men to practise things that are unseemly, either in their demure look or in their uncouth garb ; as if to be contemptible and despicable in this way, were the perfection of the christian state. Against these two mistakes, the sourness and morosity of mal-contents, and the superstitions of the factious, I have observed that the prophet saith, *do not glory*, but doth neither deny the things as gifts of God, nor disallow our having of them, neither doth he take away the use of them, nor deny advantage by them.

But *Secondly*, It is, *glory not, glory not*. I will give you an account of that, in four particulars which are denied. 1. We ought not upon occasion of our wit or parts, or of our power and interest, or of our wealth and revenue, we ought not to think ourselves sufficient, and that we are provided for. That is challenged in the parable, *Luke xii. 19. I will say to my soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry ;* he was a fool for saying so, *much goods laid up ;* that is not the use of these things, for a man to account himself well accommodated, furnished to all purposes. 2. We ought not upon this occasion to have any proud reflections upon our own excellencies, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did, *Dan. iv. 30. Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ?* 3. We are not to have *mental satisfaction*, acquiescence in them, as if they were ultimate, which is the miscarriage of *Babylon*, *Rev. xviii. 7. How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow*  
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*Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.* 273

*give her ; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.* Considering these things, things within the mind, health in the body, things about us ; we ought not to think we are accomplished by them. 4. We ought not to have any of these things, or use them in the place of God : the prophet *Jeremiah* gives us an account of that, *Jer. xvii. 11. As a partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not : so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.* And the psalmist gives us an account of that, *Psal. xvii. 14. From the men of the world, which have their portion in this life.* *Psal. x. 4. God is not in all his thoughts.* *Luke xii. 21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.* These four things are excluded by *glory not* ; we must not think ourselves sufficient, or that we are provided ; we must not proudly reflect upon ourselves, and think these our excellencies ; we must not have satisfaction, acquiescence in them, as if we had nothing farther to look after ; we must not have them instead of God ; but as instruments, and for the honour and service of God.

*Thirdly,* In the next place I shall give you an account why there may be a temptation from these things to glory. *First,* There may be a shew of reason for glorying in wisdom, upon a five-fold account. 1. Because wisdom is the excellency of a spirit, the excellence and accomplishment of spirits, 'tis the perfection of the interior man. 2. It is in itself a real truth. 3. It is to be permanent and continue as long as souls do, yea to be further perfected ; where-



274 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

as the things of the body fail when the body fails.

4. It doth really recommend a man without any abatement ; that he is a wise and understanding man, it is a real commendation. 5. It is the proper improvement of the natural faculty.—In the *second* place there is much less colour for glorying in bodily strength, and that for seven or eight reasons. 1. Sicknes may soon take it away ; a man falls downward in a moment, but recovers leisurely. Yea perhaps a man may retain a great measure of bodily health and strength, yet in a sickness his disease will burn the more, as fire in green-wood ; sickness may soon take this away : sickness which may begin from what is necessary and unavoidable, as eating, drinking, sleeping, exercise : which are the necessaries of life, and things most useful for the body, yet sickness may be occasioned from any of these ; yea sickness may suddenly surprize us ; and for ought we know, the beginning of a disease may be upon us already ; and though we do not feel it, yet it may seize upon us next moment : therefore there is no glorying in bodily perfection ; which is called might and strength. 2. There is no glorying in bodily strength, because an accident may soon deprive men of it ; a casual fall, a wound, a fraction, the very change of air, the change of weather, any thing unkindly, any indigestion, any thing unseasonable : any of these things may dispossess a man of his bodily strength or health. 3. Take it with all its advantages, it doth not recommend rational intellectual natures ; because the beasts which are below us, excell us in it, the ox, in strength, the horse, in swiftness : and in all the perfections of  
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our senses both internal and external, we are excelled by certain animals ; despicably mean creatures do excell us in all of them. 4. The dullest spirits of all, oftentimes have the strongest and healthiest bodily constitution : yea this is the misery of it, nimble souls, well improved minds, quick, nimble and active ; they are too active for the body, that it cannot thrive and prosper under them. You may take it for granted, that the wisest of men in general, and the fittest for intellectual employments, have the weakest bodily constitution ; therefore it is not a thing to be rested on. 5. It is but a respective thing ; for might is no might in compare with mightier : if this be a strong man, if he meet with one that is stronger, he is weak in comparison with him. 6. There is no security for the things of the body, either against treachery or assassination, or a sudden surprize ; for we are wont to say, he is master of another man's life, that doth despise God and the law : for it is the utmost a government can do, to require a life for a life ; which can neither certainly protect nor make recompence, because it cannot restore. 7. and lastly, Might is nothing but usurpation and insolence, if it be against or divided from right : therefore this is no matter of glorying. And what are the great conquerors of the world ? He that conquers nations and kingdoms, he is but a great disturber, if he have not right on his side as well as might. Wherefore bodily strength or might, is not a solid foundation of glory.— *Thirdly*, Nor riches or wealth. And for this I will offer to you abundance of suggestions. 1. These things are things without us ; and the philosopher in

276 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

computing of enjoyments, says, *we do not call them our own things, that are without us.* 2. They are uncertain; *for riches make to themselves wings and fly away,* Prov. xxiii. 5. 3. They are perishable and wasting commodities, worse by loss of weight, worse by loss of virtue, &c. 4. They are the conquerors, if they prevail; they are our own but in part before. 5. We cannot truly be said to have them even while we have them; for we must necessarily trust, and cannot have them always in our hands, nor always in our sight. The friend by falsehood, and the thief by flight and craft, and the man of might by his power; in respect of all these, we are in danger. 6. They who have these things, have them for others. *Eccl. v. 11. When goods encrease, they are encreased that eat them; what good then is to the owner thereof, saving the beholding them with his eyes?* 7. Riches are but at the best, as *Plutarch* saith, a multitude of instruments. They are but tools, they are but materials, they are *medial*, they are not final, they are not ends. 8. They are often for the owner's hurt, *Eccl. v. 13. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, viz. riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.* 9. They are perilous and dangerous to posterity, for those that they leave behind them. For it is too often seen, that they who never had either the care or wit to get a penny, will never have the skill to keep a pound; easily come, easily go; that wastes easily in the hand, that never knew the getting. 10. None of these things do mend any man's mind; and a man's inner man is the man; they do not tend to the reforming of any vice, or to the informing of a  
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*Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.* 277

man concerning any noble actions. 11. They do certainly augment a man's charge, they do enlarge his account ; for he is in respect of God, but a steward. 12. They are matter of temptation, danger and difficulty. For wist you not what our Saviour hath said ? *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Mat. xix. 24. 13. Where a vast estate is gotten, there is some fear lest some have been ill-gotten ; and if so, there is matter for repentance, not matter for triumph. *Jer. xvii. 11. He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.* And know you not what the apostle admonisheth ? *1 Tim. vi. 9. They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil ; which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the truth, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* And twice Solomon hath observed, *Pro. xxviii. 20, 22. He that hasteth to be rich, shall not be innocent.* Now this is a great point. To what purpose is it for a man to accumulate, to get that by cunning, and fraud, and power, which he cannot enjoy, which he cannot call his own when he hath it ? The sin is not forgiven to any man till he hath made recompence and compensation. Yea our casuists go so far as to require of an heir to whom an estate descends, that if it be made apparent to him that he that was before him, did retain in his hands that which was not his own, contrary to right, though the heir be not under



278 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

the guilt, yet they wish him to look to himself that he be not under obligation to make restitution. We are wont to say, *happy is the son whose father gave away his soul*; the sense is, it is better for him in a worldly respect; but it is better, if acquired by fraud or cunning, that he make restitution. This is a sad consideration, I leave it to your meditation. 14. They do not lengthen any man's life. For the rich hath neither longer life than the poor, nor more health. 15. They do not cure any disease, neither do they ease a man under any pain. 16. Again: what they do procure us, is rather fear than love, envy than pity. 17. Once more; they do not satisfy nature's desires; for *Seneca* hath well observed, that in case of appetite we must not add sin to sin to satisfy desire, but you must abate of the lust or the inordinate affection. For, as the poet saith, "the conqueror of the world was pent up in the world, and wanted room to breath in." So that lust is unsatisfied with things. Therefore you must reduce it to moderate desires. 18. Once more; these things do not make any man happy; for a man may be as unsatisfied, as unquiet, as thoughtful, as much in fear, as much in danger, if he be surrounded with wealth, as if he were poor. 19. Lastly; they do not so much as improve our natural faculties. We have not our faculties enlarged by them; but wealth doth rather narrow and contract our spirits than amplify and enlarge our powers. Do but weigh these things, and I believe you will conclude, that there is no solid foundation of glorying in *might* or *wealth*.

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## DISCOURSE LXXXVI.

Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.

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JER. ix. 23, 24.

*Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom.*

NOW I come in the next place to consider the other. And this hath a far greater pretence than either of the other two, as being nearer to us. The wise man to glory in his *wisdom*. I can alledge many things, as I have said, why a man should applaud himself in wisdom; for 1<sup>st</sup>. Wisdom is the excellency of a spirit, which is the choice part of man, every man's soul is himself. 2<sup>dly</sup>. It is in itself a real truth, for wisdom is a reality, as much as folly is a privation and madness. 3<sup>dly</sup>. It is a thing that is permanent, and will be carried on to perfection; for nothing of this nature begun here will be lost: it may be swallowed up as a candle by the light of the sun, but it will not be extinct, it will not be vanquish'd, but will be carried on to perfection. 4<sup>thly</sup>. It doth certainly recommend a man; for without any terms of diminution, a wise man is commended for his wisdom. 5<sup>thly</sup> and lastly. It is the proper improvement of our natural faculties.—But yet we must not glory in our wisdom, for so saith the wise man, *Pro. xxiii. 4. Labour not to be rich, cease from thine own wisdom,*

280 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion*

*wisdom.* For two reasons we cannot glory in our wisdom ; 1. Because a man must not center in himself. 2. Man is to be sensible, that as his being is precarious and dependent, so also his whole furniture, all his endowments, all his acquisitions and superstructure. Here I say three things. (1.) It is not competent to a creature to terminate himself in himself ; for if so, God is excluded, and there will be no place left for God in the world. (2.) There can be no pretence for it, as our case is, because we are fallen, we are in an apostate state, we are degenerate, we have marred our spirits, we have spoiled our principles, by unnatural use ; so that it is worse with us than it was, or than it should be. We are only valuable as we are recovered, and thanks to the grace of God for that capacity. (3.) And then there is the reason in the thing itself, why it should not be : for we are but in measure and degree, we have but in part, we understand but in part, we were never better than finite and fallible, therefore there is no self-sufficiency, no foundation to glory.

Now to speak distinctly to this head we must distinguish wisdom. 1<sup>st</sup>. Under this name and notion we understand worldly skill, dexterity, sagacity, the knowledge of arts and sciences ; of tongues and languages. 2<sup>dly</sup>. We understand by this, carnal policy, that is a principle that rules much in this monstrous degenerate world ; and this doth absolve itself from the bounds of reason and religion, and considers only particular interest. I will shew you there is no reason to glory in this, because it is our shame, as being a deviation from that which is good. 3<sup>dly</sup>.

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There is divine knowledge, and this is true wisdom, and this the prophet doth reserve that we may glory in it ; because this leads us to a conjunction with the ultimate end ; this brings us to God who is the center of our souls, and is to be final to us as much as he is original.

I. Worldly skill, dexterity and sagacity in the affairs of this life, is a thing good in its kind ; for the third, the knowledge of God and of things celestial, that is throughout good : and for the second, carnal policy, it is totally naught, it is the counterfeite of a thing ; it is a thing degenerate, adulterate, and nothing is more branded in holy scripture than that which we call carnal policy : it is *the wisdom* St. *James* speaks of, *James* iii. 15. *that doth not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish.* It is the wisdom St. *Paul* speaks of, 1 *Cor.* i. 21. *The world by wisdom knew not God.* For thus ; it doth either subordinate all to worldly ends, gain and profit, and favours not the things that are of God, gives God no real consideration nor place ; either there goes along with it stupid senselessness of the honour of God, of the difference of good and evil, of the rule and law of conscience ; or gross neglect of these ; or else hypocritical dissimulation, pretence to honesty and conscience, but not out of any regard or respect to God, or love to righteousness and truth, but the more effectually to deceive and to promote arbitrary selfish-ends, such as are wholly excentrical and unnatural to religion ; and this is profaneness and irreligion in the height. Yea it is the grossest profaneness, because it doth unduly practise upon and serve itself of religion and

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conscience, using them as means to self-ends : yet the subjects of these, glory therein and applaud themselves against the rule of conscience, bear up against all account of good and evil ; and those things that are according either to the nature or mind of God. Now this is wholly a corrupt and a depraved thing, and depends upon the abuse of our discerning and governing faculties. Now this is every where decried in scripture, and is called the wisdom of the world, the wisdom of the flesh, the wisdom of the serpent. Wit divided from right, it denotes a principle in the utmost abuse of itself : now to glory in this, were to glory in that which is a man's shame. This is that which we call carnal policy, a pretence to wit and skill, an ability that is separated from honesty, that doth over-rule reason and conscience, hath no true regard to God, but pursues its own ends, interests, humours, lusts and pleasures, and subordinates God, reason, religion and conscience to it : this we condemn, this we wholly reprobate, as that which doth practise upon God, and makes God himself a medium to a man's self, to his lusts, to his ends ; for this spirit takes no cognisance either of the rules of reason or the law of God or the nature of God, or the difference of things : but if it do at all own them, it is but in pretence, to deceive more effectually, and to compass its own ends.

II. Worldly wisdom, the wisdom of this life ; by this we mean skill, knowledge and dexterity in the mystery of arts and sciences ; either mental or intellectual, or manual and mechanical ; the skill of tongues and languages, and prudence in the administration

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administration of the affairs of this life. Now all these are truths and realities ; for they are the gifts of God. And these men are well accomplished, and are all profitable instruments in the common-wealth, and fit to do service. God doth own these perfecti- ons in men, for God gives them, *Isa.* xxviii. 26. God doth instruct the husbandman, teaches him to plow and to discern the seasons, to fit his soil with his grain ; and *Solomon* saith, the prudent man fore- sees the evil, and so provides against it ; and *Psal.* cxii. 5. *The good man doth guide his affairs with dis- cretion.* Now though these be not things that have immediate reference to the state of eternity, yet they are a high accomplishment, and do render men com- mendable and useful, and fit for the service of the common-wealth. It is true, they are short, and in- sufficient to raise a man to his ultimate end ; for they are disproportionate to that ; but yet they are requi- site and accommodate to this state, and they are fit for a man ; they are requisite accomplishments for us, as we are the present inhabitants of the earth. The skill of several mysteries and employments, several arts and sciences, several tongues and languages, prudence in managing of affairs, and in forming and disposing of things. These persons thus endowed, thus furnished and accomplished, are God's instru- ments for good service in the present state. There- fore parents and governors, such as are trusted, do admirable service, when they take care to educate those that are subject to their government, when they breed them up in some of these ways of wisdom, so that their faculties may be improved and they em- ployed

284 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

ployed for the good of the community ; some one way and some another. This is an account and justification of schools of learning, places of ingenious education ; for they do *naturam promovere*, for the promoting of that good beginning, when God laid the foundation of reason in human nature. These do sow God's seed in God's soil ; and they draw forth the several virtues that God hath implanted, in subordination to the divine dispensation, and God's government of the world ; that the community may be furnished from a joint service of the several parts. Now there is so great reason for this, that every one should set himself to be serviceable, to be useful for some purposes, for some business and employment of life ; that the apostle says, *if a man will not labour, let him not eat* ; else a man is an unprofitable burden upon the earth ; he is like *Solomon's* field, sown with thistles : men whose parts are not improved, are not fitted for any employment ; they are good for no purpose of human life, they are fools, wanting in this wisdom.—Now while this dexterity and skill is cried down in confusion and without distinction from carnality and worldliness in a corrupt sense ; of which I spoke before : disservice is done, and persons are discouraged in their commendable employments ; for this being a true end, and a real and commendable perfection, and the gift of God, and a true improvement of our faculties, it is not to be spoken prejudicially or undervaluingly of ; for we should not, to advance a thing of a higher nature, cast disparagement upon a lower : but say, rather these things ought to be taken care of, and things of higher nature

ture by no means neglected. A particular calling and employment doth well consist with the general calling of a christian. Are not all these things the very workmanship of God? But this is all that can be said in this case. These perfections, tho' they recommend, and are valuable, and qualify us for good service, though they tend to the usefulness and security of life, yet they are not matter of our glorying or of our boasting, for a man to pride himself in them, to applaud himself because of them; because they do not extend to accomplish a man, or put him in possession of his ultimate happiness; for he may acquire things of a higher order, and he may be brought to higher accomplishments and perfections than these things can advance him to. But this I say, they do really recommend and qualify a man for good service, and they tend to the security of a man's life, and are of great use in the world; for if we do not fully employ ourselves, we shall less live, and we shall be exposed to temptations, to temptation of being arrogant, proud and conceited; as if we were too good for any labour or particular employment; or else of sinking down into a mal-content frowardness: for this you may be assured of; mens faculties will not lie idle, a man's wits and parts will turn upon himself, if they be not drawn out into exercise; if a man do not employ and exercise himself in some commendable and lawful employment. Useful business is necessary for our own preservation and security, as well as it is due upon a publick account and for the service of the universe. But though these be true accomplishments



plishments and real perfections, and the gifts of God, and recommend a man, yet they are not things that a man can acquiesce in ; he cannot think himself accomplished by them, he cannot pride or applaud himself in them, and that for these three reasons. 1. Because all these accomplishments are inadequate and not proportionable to our capacities. For intellectual nature is capable of being more highly raised and of nobler endowments, of higher perfections. Intellectual nature hath a secret desire and thirst after God ; and therefore it cannot be accomplished, neither can it be satisfied, unless it find out and pitch upon that object which is most proper and peculiar. If any man will grant me that one principle, which is certain and we know it by experience, I shall sufficiently secure religion by it ; for *intellectus quærit Deum*, it is the nature of our mind and understanding to seek after God : therefore though a man be never so well accomplished, if he be devoid of sense and apprehension of God, he must be unfurnished ; for he is unsatisfied, he hath not enough to satisfy the connatural desires of his immortal soul. 2. All these accomplishments, they are but momentary and temporary, they are but for use while we are here. Prudence in mens affairs, dexterities in several mysteries of trades, and professions, of languages and tongues, all manual arts, they are but of use for this state. 3. Man being intentionally born to eternity, though he run through time first ; he needs higher and greater accomplishments than the accomplishments of this nature are of : for though he be born in time, it is but as a passage, and he was intentionally born to eternity,

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ty, though he hath a course to pass through time. Therefore he doth need higher accomplishments than what belong to this present state. If he hath no better accomplishments than these, when he comes to die, he may be as much at a loss as the great emperor *Adrian* was, *O my soul, the happy companion of my body, that hath kept my body alive, and by whom I have so many enjoyments, what will become of thee when thou shalt depart from my body.* — For these three reasons we must not sit down in these kind of accomplishments; because they are inadequate, and not proportionate to our capacities, because they hold no farther than the present state, and because man is intentionally born to eternity.

III. Divine wisdom, the knowledge of God and divine things, things every way worthy, things that are every way in conjunction with eternal life, *To know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, John xvii. 3. *Life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel*, that is, made fairly knowable and well assured and asserted. — Knowledge in scripture-sense, is an effectual principle, and rests not in any notion of the head, or in any simple apprehension: for this is a rule that divines go upon and understand in scripture; there is a pregnancy in the language and phrase of scripture. Words of sense and understanding in scripture, do suppose the concomitant affection and the consequent effect; so that when you are called upon to know God, you are required to love and delight in him, which are affections connatural to the knowledge and perception of God; and you are commanded to obey him, which

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288 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

is a proper and consequent effect : and thus you are to understand scripture ; in things that are of the same nature and order, the scripture puts one, and means all. Scripture often speaks of *faith*, meaning also *repentance* in conjunction ; sometimes repentance alone, and faith is not excluded : for this is an usual figure in scripture, in saying things, name one and mean all, because they are all of the same nature, stand and fall together. Just as the philosopher says of his virtues, “ all true virtues are in a conjunction, because they are all united in prudence : ” so all graces, and gifts, and good affections, they are united in a renewed sanctified temper, reconciled to the nature, mind and will of God, and the rule of righteousness. Wherefore, where there is one, there is all. And this is the knowledge that the scripture lays stress upon : for the truth is, if I have knowledge of God without affection, and if it doth not produce observance of him ; it would be for our condemnation, not for our justification. And therefore God doth never mean that any one doth understand or believe, if he doth not so receive as to admit it to be an over-ruling commanding principle : and we understand ourselves so ; for if a man swear he believes such a thing, yet we should not think so, if he do the contrary. No man can believe that a man thinks a thing to be poison, if he himself drinks it ; or that this is a hazardous precipice, if he throws himself head-long ; or that water will drown him, if he flings himself into it. For things are better assured by concomitant affection and by consequent effects, than by bare pretensions in the notion. For *Aristotle* tells us very well that

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that bare speculation, knowledge and notion, is very little in the way of virtue, unless it be savory knowledge, or knowledge with a sense, when a man hath the gust of the thing as well as a precise separate abstract notion of it.

Now this same knowledge of divine and heavenly things, is of a double sort. Those things that are knowable by natural light, as the moral part of religion, the principles of God's creation ; as that we are under obligation to good self-government, to live according to rules of reason, modesty, sobriety, purity, temperance ; that in our converse one with another, and in our carriage and behaviour in the family of God, we ought to maintain brotherly love, and to act with all calmness and gentleness ; to do according to the measures and rules of right, and equity and fairness and due consideration ; and that in respect of God there be all reverential regard, all submission and humble deprecation, all due acknowledgements, all ingenuous returns, all pious devotions and affections, all reverence and submission to his will. These are the principles of God's creation, and to these God made man, and we are naturally under the obligation of them : these are the great materials of natural knowledge ; and if any man say he doth not know these things, I will tell him he hath lived downward, backward ; he hath lived to make himself less ; he hath lived idle in the world ; he hath neglected God's soil, he hath sown no seed, and therefore hath no hopes of any crop : for all men universally are under obligation in these matters ; and men of any education, even the heathens themselves,



290 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

have acknowledged these. The other notices of divine revelation, are as knowable and intelligible as these ; that God doth pardon sin upon Christ's mediation and intercession, upon the terms of the covenant of grace, that is, that he will certainly pardon sin to all that repent and believe the gospel, and that he will accept of their weak and imperfect obedience, and will take it in good part, and accept them to all intents and purposes, as much as if a man were invested with full power of man in the moment of his creation, and that he did compleatly and exactly fulfil all righteousness. And though some men do pretend that religion is not intelligible, they dishonour God very much ; for that which God hath now revealed, is as plain and as intelligible as any other matter : the mysteries of religion were the secrets of his will before they were revealed, but after they are told us, they cease to be mysteries. And it is no more a mystery that God (in and through Christ) will pardon sin to all that repent if they have done amiss, than it is a mystery that a man that is rational and intelligent ought to live soberly, righteously and godly : and I do understand it as well that I ought to repent and believe the gospel, as I understand that I ought to love and fear God. All religion is now intelligible : the moral part of it was intelligible from the creation : that which was pure revelation by the gospel, is intelligible ever since, and not a mystery. Therefore we be-fool ourselves to talk that religion is not knowable, and we cannot understand it : for understand it we may, if we will ; for if it be revealed, it is made intelligible ; if not intelligible,

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it is not revealed. We are now come to that which is the true excellency and glory of man ; and that wherein a man may have hearts ease, quiet and satisfaction : but yet give me leave to interpose, that though this be in itself a true excellency, a high perfection, and far transcends all other perfections, yet there are three considerations require of us a modest and humble sense, even in respect of this knowledge. 1. That we are less beholden to ourselves for it. 2. That it is more imperfect than it might be. 3. That it is less effectual than it should be.

1. That we are less beholden to ourselves for it. For if every good and perfect gift comes from above, then this being a gift of a spiritual nature, God is to be thanked for it ; and it becomes every one of us to ask this question, *who made us to differ ? And what have we that we have not received ?* Now the inspiration of the almighty gave us this knowledge and understanding ; it is given to us from above, to be wise in this sense ; that consideration will make us modest and humble ; and to rejoice and receive inward consolation, yea also to be thankful.

2. It is more imperfect than it might be : for we have not, as we might, awakened our faculties by meditation, mental consideration and searching of scripture ; we can hardly acquit ourselves in discharging ourselves fully and worthily, according to the weight and consideration of the matter, concerning the employing of our faculties of mind and understanding in meditation and mental consideration, that so we might attain as much of this knowledge as might be : we have not been so much of the *Bereans*

temper, but we have too much rested in supposition not examining the principles of education, tho' never so certainly grounded. Now here, I say, as the moralists are wont to speak, there are in some dispositions a great easiness to the practice of some virtues ; but it is not virtue in that man, in whom it is merely a natural temper and disposition ; some are very much inclin'd to modesty, and others are very fair and good-natured ; others find more difficulty from their natural temper ; for it doth not amount to a compleatness of virtue, unless it be the fruit and effect of consideration. Neither doth that which is our natural disposition amount to the full notion of vice, unless there be gross self-neglect. I say here, a man may chance, through the benefit of his education, to be well instructed, and acquainted with all truth ; but truly he is not commendable for it, unless he himself hath considered, weighed and examined, and searched the scriptures, and hath brought it to the test ; the true dictates of reason in necessary matters, and the revelation of scripture, in matters of faith. Then it is divine knowledge in him, when he doth receive it and admit it upon the particular evidence and assurance of truth ; not only because it is the religion of his country or common profession, or because he receives it as a principle of education. If a man hath not taken this pains, if he be not thus grounded in his religion, he is very shallow and unsettled in his religion ; and it is a great question whether he will hold out : this therefore will abate, if so be we are not thus intelligent, and if we have not attained to these perfections in the matters of our religion,

*Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.* 293

gion, and have too much estranged ourselves from that which is the proper and natural employment of mind and understanding : principles that have a peculiar dedication to God.

3. It is less effectual than it should be : that we have not walked up to our knowledge as we ought, but have in some degree held truth in unrighteousness, which in a high degree is the practice of the worst of men, and of persons self-condemned. That we have in some measure received the grace of God, in vain ; for it is so far in vain, as it is less effectual than it might be. That we have not so employed our talents, as to make gain for our master's advantage ; that we have not so abounded in the work of the Lord : that we have not so grown in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour ; *that we have not crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*, Gal. v. 24. *That we have not been so thoroughly renewed in the spirit of our minds*, Eph. iv. 23. Now these allays are to be put in, and these abate our triumphing in ourselves, our glorying in ourselves. We may have comfort, heart's ease, content in this knowledge, but we have rather cause to magnify the grace and goodness of God, than to glory in ourselves ; because we are so much beholden, and because this knowledge hath not been so perfect as it might be, nor so effectual as it should be. But to proceed : we are not to glory in our own wisdom for two reasons. The wise man bids us cease from our own wisdom, do not depend upon it, be not self-confident, do not think yourself sufficient ; for two reasons. 1. A man is not to center in himself. 2. A man is to be fen-



294 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

sible that as his being is precarious and dependent, so also is all his furniture, all his endowments, all his acquisitions and all his superstructures. A man is not to center in himself ; and a man is to know that all his requisite accomplishments and endowments and acquisitions, as well as his being ; he is beholden for them : his being is arbitrary, dependent and precarious ; so is all that is built upon it. Now these two I will make appear by these three things. 1. It is incompatible to a creature to terminate in himself : for this is a certain rule ; that which is not original to itself, cannot be final to itself. Now no creature is original to itself, therefore it must not terminate its actions finally in itself : now if a creature might terminate in himself, he might leave God out, and it would not be his fault to be without God in the world. 2. There is no pretence for it, in a fallen and degenerate creature. For there every thing is worse than it was, and far worse than it should be ; for innocence is lost, and guiltiness contracted, and there is impotence instead of strength, there is a foundation laid of unnatural disposition and inclination ; a man hath himself to seek, is at a loss ; so that here is the greatest enquiry that ever was in the world, and it is not resolved but by the direction of scripture, how came evil into the world ; since God is good ? This is not resolved without the light and direction of scripture ; *who will shew us any good ?* and *what is truth ?* so much is man (having abused himself) at a loss. Therefore men, as we are beings in a worse condition than we were, having our knowledge lessened, our strength abated, having guilt to our consciences,

sciences, having marred and spoiled our natures by ill use, custom and practice ; therefore there is no reason, why we should terminate in ourselves ; therefore we are not to applaud and glory in ourselves. 3. There is reason why it should not be so. Take us with all advantages, what we have, it is but in measure and degree ; so that here is a cause of motion, and occasion of desire and an endeavour after farther perfection, and not cause of rest and satisfaction, and sitting down with full content and acquiescence : the perfections and accomplishments we have, are but in measure and degree ; and we know that in nature every thing moves to its own perfections, and all things are in motion till they come to their center, or attain the height of that perfection, of which they are capable ; so that what we have, is but as a stock to trade withal, and put us in motion, to enlarge our desires ; but it is not so much as that we may sit down satisfied and acquiesce in it : for this is a true rule in religion ; an excellency that is not in its fulness, as *it is*, so *it is not* ; it is, because it is so in kind ; it is not, because it is defective in degree : and if there be any defect, there is a privation in part ; and a privation in part doth reproach and challenge, as well as having in part doth adorn. So that it is a remembrance, wherein we are defective ; and to engage us to search and enquire after further endeavour ; so it may excite us to industry, and make us look abroad.

## DISCOURSE LXXXVII.

Men have nothing to glory of, but Religion.

JER. ix. 24.

*Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.*

**W**E have a good rule for interpretation of scriptures, that words that denote sense and apprehension, they are always to be understood in an effectual way, so as to carry along with them suitable affections and effects that are consequent upon them. I do not reckon it to be knowledge, unless men stand affected towards things according as the nature of things known do require. If they be things lovely, our knowledge is attended with complacency and delight and desire after them; and then our knowledge is pursued by endeavours suitable and proportionable. Wherefore to know and understand God according to this explication, is to have sense and apprehension, such notions in man's mind, as recommend God to us, and recommend him to us as lovely. And knowledge is pursued by all its consequent effects, diligence to please him, readiness to serve him, activity in executing all his commands. This you may also observe in scripture, that scripture doth frequently put one act instead of all those acts that

that are connatural and fuitable ; wherefore sometime you have faith when repentance is comprehended tho' not mentioned ; sometime repentance when faith is not mentioned. For this is a rule, that in things that are connatural and of the same nature, where there is one there is all the rest. *Aristotle* hath this notion in his moral virtues, of which he reckons eleven ; they are all connext and all terminate in prudence : so it is in divinity ; that radical and vital spirit of religion which doth appear in one act that is truly an act of religion and of purity and conscience, that act will also produce all other acts that are connatural and fuitable. Also you yourselves do comprehend that no man doth know, understand and believe, if he do act the contrary ; no man believes a thing to be deadly poison, if he will take it. This in the general : that you may understand here that it is not a precise notion of the understanding alone, but it is such an act as contains in it the utmost improvement and highest excellency of the whole man, to understand and know God. And truly thus to understand and know God, we *may glory* ; for we have a hearty satisfaction ; for nothing is more satisfactory to the mind of man, than to perceive God, and to receive from him. It is good to draw near to God ; happiness and immortality are in his presence, hell and misery in the loss of him. It is so much of the future state, as this state will bear. For the future state is ever to be with the Lord ; and he that is awakened to a lively sense of God in his soul, he is much with God, he closes with all advantages to think of him, and to make all application to him ;  
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298 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

this is a lively sensation and perception of God in our minds, the love of God ruling in our hearts, the fear of God before our eyes, being always in the sight and apprehension of God ; *how precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God ! When I awake, I am still with thee*, Psal. cxxxix. 17, 18. A man may be said to *awake* in the sense of the *Psalmist*, upon a five-fold account. 1. When I did awake, or when I arose out of nothing into being ; that is, when God at first made us, he made us to have sight and sense and apprehension of him ; for then *the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord*, lighted by God ; a candle is, *lux illuminata & lux illuminans*, so the spirit of a man, for mind and understanding are faculties fitted for God, that have an appropriation unto God. 2. When we awake by spiritual regeneration ; so the apostle saith of regeneration, he hath shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God, that is, when he takes us out of the darkness of sin and brings us unto the light of God. 3. When I awake every morning, when I awake from nature's rest ; for my eyes prevent the dawnings of the morning, I prevent the night watches in thoughts of him. 4. When I awake, that is, after I have given over to act or to think, when I begin *de novo*, take a new thing in hand ; for it is creature-like and christian too, to begin always with God, to acknowledge him duly, to ask him leave, go out in his name, depend upon his assistance in every further undertaking ; that is, whenever I engage in a new business, awake to a new employment. 5. When I awake, when I shall awake at the resurrection unto life ; for then we shall be ever with the Lord.

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It is well observed by our great orator *Tully*, that religion is a kind of justice towards God ; we do God right by religious motion, for we do *suum tribuere*. Observance, regard, and dutiful acts in religion, are the bond between God and man : by religion we become also partakers of the divine nature ; we come to imitate and resemble him. Religion is in us, the resemblance and likeness of God. By religion we come to have the same sense of things, and the same motions with God himself. For we are reconciled to God, to goodness, righteousness and truth. Religion, it brings us to God, stays us with God, and makes us to end in him. The law of nature makes it the common condition of created beings, to live, to move and to have being in God ; but it is religion that gives sense and feeling of it, to use the apostle's words, *Acts xvii. 27. if haply they might feel after him and find him*. Wicked men are said to be *without God in the world*, *Eph. ii. 12*. God is *far from their reins*, *Jer. xii. 2*. God is not in their thoughts, notwithstanding his almighty essence doth support and maintain them in being ; for this is the explication of it. They that are reconciled in temper and disposition to God, they are near ; then God is present and they are capable of him and apprehensive of him : but God is not present to him that is wicked and in a malign spirit, in a contrary disposition to the nature of God. We are present to God by conformity to God ; we are absent from him by dissimilitude and unlikeness to God. God is not enjoyed by bare notion and speculation, but by imitation and resemblance, *viz.* when we are in measure  
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300 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

and degree according to our proportion, what God himself is in his height, excellency and fulness. It was a good and short definition of religion, of one of the ancient fathers, *summa religionis imitari quod colis*. This is the sum of all religion, and it lies in this, to imitate him whom we worship, and to endeavour after those excellencies and perfections which we do attribute to God. The state of religion consists in a God-like frame and temper of mind, and expresses itself in life and actions conformed to the divine will; and whoever is not renewed and changed in the spirit of his mind, not finally settled in a good frame of spirit and brought to lead a good life, he doth but deceive himself about religion; for his religion is but a name. *Psal. cxi. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they, and only they, who do his commandments*. This is to understand God, to execute his pleasure; to fulfill his will, to follow his guidance and direction. Now on the contrary, wickedness is a declared independence upon God, and a renunciation of him. Religion settles itself in settling the mind in intimacy and acquaintance with God. The soul that is enlivened by religion, seeing the brightness and excellency of divinity, is dissolved into affection after God, so as fire doth expire in a sun-beam. A holy understanding climbs up to God by contemplation, meditation and motion of heavenly affection, as to the image and some resemblance of God; climbing up by steps to behold God, the original and the fountain of all happiness. For religion, it is an efflux of primitive truth and goodness upon the souls and spirits of

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of men. Now I will give you an account of this in three particulars.

1. By understanding and knowing God in the sense I have expressed, we come to a true self-enjoyment, to a solid content and satisfaction, such as is necessary to make us happy. For there is no happiness, unless there be a composure of mind, heart's-ease, quiet, content and satisfaction. Now if we do know and understand God in this sense, then we shall be brought to this self-enjoyment, this quiet and satisfaction ; for vital and formal happiness within us, consists in the fruition of the object of happiness. The moralists are wont to distinguish between *objective* happiness and *formal* happiness. Formal happiness, that is that act of ours, whether it be intellection, or dilection, or both, whereby we ourselves are united to God, do enjoy him, objective happiness, God is the objective happiness, because he is the object that makes them happy who do enjoy him : for this is certain, we do but *uti mundo*, but we do *frui Deo*. For concerning means, it is the use of means : but fruition and enjoyment, is the enjoyment of the end. Now God is the utmost end ; he is the object that doth make happy ; therefore all other things else, are but as means ; God is the center, and there is motion towards the center ; God is the center of spirits and immortal souls.

2. Our souls have not the utmost use and improvement of themselves, saving in the enjoyment of God. For all other things and all other employment is below the *possibility* and capacity of the faculty ; and you know a man suffers great loss if his parts and abilities



302 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

bilities be beyond his employment. Now if we terminate ourselves in ourselves or in any creature below God, our employment is unsuitable to the proportion of our faculties ; therefore it must be to our loss.

3. Otherwhere there is dissatisfaction and emptiness. By our understanding and knowing God, we are brought into a state of quiet, self-enjoyment, solid content and satisfaction ; our souls are reconciled to God by a participation of his nature : have such pregnancy from God, as both quickens their motions and sweetens their work. Souls that are transformed into the divine nature and image, feel at times strong and vigorous inclinations and motions towards that which is good ; so great and ravishing delights in the acts of religion, as excel all the pleasures of sense. Souls that are reconciled to the laws of heaven, the immutable and unchangeable laws of everlasting righteousness, goodness and truth, have a great deal of internal peace, quiet and satisfaction by compliance with these rules, and feel often such influence and communications from God, as give great delight and satisfaction, such as far transcend all the pleasures of sense. *Psal. xxxvi. 8. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make him drink of the river of thy pleasures.* They relish great pleasure and satisfaction in the sense of God's goodness, and in paying their best praises and acknowledgments to God. That composedness of mind, which is essential to happiness and a main ingredient in it ; it arises not from the soul's collecting and gathering itself within the circumference of its

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own essence, and living upon its own issues and motions, improvement of its own natural endowments and possibilities : but it depends upon its union with the first and primitive unity, which is the center of rest. For *thy comforts refresh our souls*, Psal. xciv. 19. whereas the multitude of other thoughts rather disturb and distract than give comfort. Therefore it is that none but those that are truly wise and sincerely good, can have internal peace and satisfaction in themselves. All the content others have, is grounded upon incogitancy and inadvertency ; it is not solid, sincere. It would be a happiness too scant and narrow for the mind to be separate from all things else by a recession into itself, so to spend itself to all eternity in self-converse without enjoyment of God : a diminutive, narrow, superficial nothing it is, and must necessarily be so in itself. This I speak, if a man compare with the original and fountain of being and welfare ; in competition with which a man's self is as nothing. This we find in ourselves (if we know ourselves and are acquainted with our own desires,) that God hath planted in man a spring of constant motion, which with invincible impatience forces a man out of himself, violently tossing him to and fro till he fix upon some solid and self-substantial good. *Many will say, who will shew us any good ? Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us*, Psal. iv. 6. Yea though it be so, that in this sunk, degenerate and apostate state of mankind, reason be too much depressed and even inthrall'd to sense ; yet it is not so quite bereft of all sense (at all times at least) of its noble pedigree ; but is now and then awaken-  
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304 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

ed by God, stirred up at times to some generous motions in itself ; touched with some deep remorse at the remembrance of its own ancient, pristine state and dignity ; and when it remembers, recollects and considers what it was or may be, doth make some faint essays after the recovery of that which was lost. Now this is the great goodness of God and compassion to us in this lost bewildred condition, that he doth direct and guide those motions that arise in us to the height of our make ; we descending from so high an off-spring. This, I say, is the grace of God in exciting and stirring up in us those motions, that he might restore us. But to make out my observation in three particulars, that there is no solid rest, no heart's ease, no true composure, no satisfaction to the soul of man, but in application to God and in some enjoyment of him.

1. Were the whole world so quiet, as not in the least to attempt upon the composure or consistency of man's mind, he could not be at rest ; whereas we know what a place of hurlyburly, of confusion and distraction, this world is.

2. Were a man out of danger in respect of all checks of his conscience, he could not be at rest ; whereas we know that the wicked and profane of the world, they are more in danger from themselves than from any thing from without ; and when they are applauded and live in jollity, and are adored by others, yet when they retire, they have inward checks and reproof from their own consciences.

3. Had a man even security from *heaven*, that God would not disturb him, by imbittering his thoughts,

thoughts, or raising in him horrid and dreadful apprehensions; he could not be at rest; whereas we know that the mind of man is no where exempt from God's government: but if consent be given to known iniquity, God doth appear, as he will to sinners confusion and astonishment; as in these instances; when *Adam* had transgressed, *Gen. iii. 11. Hast thou eaten of the forbidden fruit?* How did that confound and astonish him? So God's question to *Cain*, *Gen. iv. 9. Where is Abel thy brother?* Or as in the case of *Belshazzar*, on account of that profaneness in making use of the consecrated vessels to carouse in, *Dan. v. 5. A hand writing upon the wall* makes him tremble and shake.

Now I say, give all these advantages, and these seem to speak him secure from others: yet notwithstanding all these, see how hard it is to secure any man from himself: a man will find something within himself to tear and rend him from himself, to toss him from his own foundation and consistency; viz. the insatiable desire in man's soul not satisfied within itself. If a man were privileged in all these ways, and secure from these dangers, yet a man would find something within himself that will rend and tear him from himself and toss him from his own foundation; viz. an unsatiable desire in man's soul, not satisfied in himself or any thing that is founded in his own goodness: for this is most certain; in the issue of all, and at the long-run, no man can take up and set down fully satisfied with himself alone. No man is good enough to his own satisfaction; the guilt that men have, will make them tremble when they do



306 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

reflect. The best of men are sensible that they have been depraved, that they are short and imperfect, and not as they would be ; wherefore to happiness this is necessary, that a man be brought to this, that he hath but one knowledge ; that he hath but one main dependence, that must be upon God, who is both original and final.——This is the effect of religion, to reduce and bring a man back again from his exorbitancy and extravagancy, and to restore him to God, and settle him there. And the philosopher tells us, that by the creatures, the mind of man doth climb up to God as by so many steps or stairs. Our souls united to divinity in holy communion, are impregnated with generous and noble seeds of immortality. Now as to know God, is to be in reconciliation with God, as to be in possession and conjunction with happiness ; so to do any thing wherein God may not be acknowledged, any thing that is contrary to religion ; to consent to sin, iniquity and folly ; it is doing what is unnatural, and contrary to our interest. A man doth himself the greatest wrong, offers to himself the greatest violence, doth dispossess himself of the best enjoyment, when he doth betray his innocence and consents to iniquity, doth any thing to displease God, alienate himself from him ; then he provokes God to withdraw : for the very nature of things tells us, wickedness is sufficient to make a man miserable ; as holiness is to make him happy, so wickedness to make him miserable.

There are two things resolved by wise and sober men ; that piety, devotion, religion and reconciliation with God, hath in it self a self-sufficiency to make a  
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man happy ; and on the contrary, iniquity and sin hath in it a compleatness to make a man forlorn and miserable. Now this I shall make appear. Sin hath no place but in such a creature as is invested with a pregnant generous sense of the difference of things upon a moral account : for no creature below man is capable of sinning, because of its own lowness ; but to sin, is where a creature is made or born to an active, vigorous, pregnant, generous sense of the difference of things upon a moral consideration. Now where there is such a sense as this, it cannot be satisfied with the poverty, lowness, narrowness and contractedness of any creature, but is carried out in a desire after a self-sufficient good. Now such a good is not enjoyed with the allowance of any true evil, because of the repugnancy that there is between good and evil. God being the chiefest good, and sin being the chiefest evil, they cannot consist together. Now this you may be assured of, if you will weigh and consider. It is a demonstration in morals, that is as clear and as satisfactory as any demonstration in the mathematicks ; a full and self-sufficient good cannot consist with any true evil, because good and evil are extremely opposite. God cannot therefore be enjoyed where any man doth commit evil, and consent to iniquity : and evil is there, where there is a generous pregnant sense of the moral difference of things ; and that sense makes a man capable of the greatest happiness in the enjoyment of the greatest good, or of the greatest misery in conjunction with the greatest evil ; and there is no true evil, but the evil of iniquity.—Now to proceed. A creature that is

308 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

inflamed with an unsatiable appetite after a self-sufficient good, cannot fall short or fail of this good without great torment, inward vexation, bitterness of mind and discontent ; for nothing doth afflict more than appetite unsatisfied. For man is made to a capacity, to a desire after a self-sufficient good ; therefore he must have bitterness of mind, perplexity, vexation, torment, if he be deprived of it, if he fall short of it. However a sinner may otherwise fare in the world where power and interest do sometimes prevail, yet I dare say, this punishment always follows upon it ; that is, inward trouble, torment, bitterness of mind, vexation, dissatisfaction ; because guilt is contracted, the person falls short of the true good, having a quick sense of an infinite appetite, an unsatiable desire : it must needs be in a pain and torment, because of this privation.

It is a true observation ; it is the hardest matter in the world to satisfy the mind of a sinner ; for if a sinner be inadvertent and incogitant, this may take him off from his thoughts of guilt and fault for a while ; but when he recollects himself, when at home, he cannot satisfy himself, but he must have remorse, his heart will ake, he will have inward bitterness, perplexity and torment. Incogitancy, avocation or company, may for a while interpose for diversion ; but when the sinner stays at home or reflects upon himself, he is reprov'd, he is challenged, he is self-condemned. This is so true, that they who never knew any thing of the deity, or they that never heard of the bible, have spoken as competently of it as any of us can do. The heathen poet saith,

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“ there is no security in any one’s case, unless this  
“ be his case, to be privy to himself of no iniquity,  
“ not to be appalled at the sense of any voluntary  
“ miscarriage.

Such a creature as I am now speaking of, who is made in a capacity to receive ; but of itself is limited, contracted and narrow ; if this creature do not lay aside fond self-conceit, vain self-flattery, and voluntarily give itself up to God ; if it be not attracted and drawn by sense and perception of the divine beauty and excellency ; if it be not allured by God’s infinite goodness and fulness ; such a creature is in a state exactly contrary to its own perfection and happiness which perfection and happiness consists in this, that God is become all things to us, and that we are entirely addicted and devoted to him, that we are inflamed with such ardor of divine affection, as will inseparably conjoin the lover and the beloved. For in this case there is nothing else left to pacify a man’s mind, but for man to live upon or to take satisfaction and content either in himself or some fellow-creature, or some pleasure in iniquity. Now none of these will do it.

*Ist.* Man is not satisfied in himself ; for the more any one knows of himself, the less he will be pleased with himself : only madmen and fools are pleased with themselves. No wise man is good enough to his own satisfaction ; for wise and good men know their shortness, fallibility, their many mistakes, their imperfections. They are so possessed with the sense of them, that though they were applauded, as *Herod* was, they would not think themselves to be Gods, because they know themselves to be but men, finite



310 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

and fallible creatures ; they would say, as the apostle said, when the people offered to deify them, *we are men subject to the same passions with yourselves* ; so that there is no internal peace, content, self-satisfaction in self-enjoyment. Therefore a man cannot be his own happiness.

2dly. He cannot be happy by the enjoyment of any fellow creatures. For, as *Job* has told us, *Job xxviii. 14. If a man turn to the sea, the depth saith, it is not in me, and the sea saith, it is not in me. O, man ! thou wast made for God, return to God ; thou canst not be satisfied, but in the enjoyment of God.*

3dly, Then for pleasure in iniquity : see what *Job* saith, *Job xx. 5. The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment. I have seen the wicked in great power, spreading himself like a green bay-tree, yet he passed away, and lo he was not, yea I sought him, but he could not be found. But mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace ; but the transgressors shall be destroyed together, and the end of the wicked shall be cut off ; but the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, he is their strength in the time of trouble. Psal. xxxvii. 35. — 40.*

There is neither safety nor security, no satisfaction in iniquity. All rest, all content and quiet, is solely in the enjoyment of God, and in reconciliation with the rule of righteousness : for then a man is inwardly whole, right and straight ; and you may as well cure a man that hath an internal wound, a disease within him, by an outward foreign application ; as you may satisfy a wounded conscience or a guilty mind, by any external or worldly accommodation.

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It must be the enjoyment of God, and an internal reconciliation with the immutable and unchangeable law of everlasting righteousness, goodness and truth, that can lay a solid foundation for any man's heart's-ease, content and satisfaction: and a man that grounds himself upon any other thing, and doth persuade himself well concerning himself, having not this assurance; he doth impose upon himself, and doth make himself live in a lie, and he will be finally frustrated and disappointed. There is no true peace in iniquity, there is no solid satisfaction but in mental reconciliation with the nature of God and law of righteousness.

Thus have I given you an account of the first particular. That it is our glory, it is our excellency to be religious: for it is our safety and the ground of all our satisfaction and content, that we know and understand God, in the sense before expressed, when I told you that words of sense and understanding are to be taken with the connatural, suitable affection, and consequent operation.

*Again*; our souls have not full use or improvement of themselves, saving in the enjoyment of God, therefore to know and understand God, is our only matter of glory, our excellency; for our souls have not the full use or true improvement of themselves, save in the enjoyment of God. To make this out. Faculties are not known till they are called forth by their several objects. You might have in the nature of man several faculties, which you should not know that you have them, if it were not for the several objects that call them forth. And in this state we ourselves

selves do not know, what latent powers our souls may have in themselves, which may open and unfold themselves when we come nearly and intimately to converse with God. We do not know in this state, till we make a nearer approach to God, but that there may be new powers that are now latent, that may explicate themselves at a nearer approach of God to us. We now in this state do not know how the blessedness may act upon our faculties. In nature many virtues of things lie still and do not appear, till things that harmonize and correspond, meet. I will give you one instance ; the instance of iron and the load-stone ; keep these two at a distance, and the affection that is between these two doth not appear. But this causes motion : so that what before seemed in these two to be dull and sluggish ; when it comes to meet with its match, when its correspondent doth appear ; then it doth declare its inward principle ; having received a touch from that body that is proper to awaken its inward virtue, it doth presently exert the same. But this power was in the thing before, but it was not exerted, it was not brought forth, till its proper object was present. God doth order nature so, that things in this lower world have sundry virtues lying hid, and do not appear till things meet with their mates, and then there is a motion by consent. The soul of man elsewhere is not matched, and, therefore is not at all excited nor sufficiently drawn forth, save in conjunction with God ; but then it doth soon display its liveliness and sprightfulness. It is an admirable saying of *Seneca* ; this argument the mind of man hath of its divine original and off-

off-spring, and of its cognation and kin to God, that it delights in divine and immaterial things; and doth not converse with them as things that are foreign, but as things that are proper, things that are its own. This argument the mind of man hath of its divinity, its divine original, that it is remarkably from God himself, that the things of God delight it, and take with it; and spirikual things it converses withal, not as things that are foreign and strange, but as things that are natural to it. In every faculty there is a kind of natural science in respect of its own proper object; whereby it singles out its own proper objects and can better define it than any artist; and in conjunction with it, hath satiety and delight: and the heads of the philosophers cannot define the objects of any sense so well, as the sense itself; no definition of tastes, of colours; no definition of fire, of light, is so taking, so satisfactory, as the perception that the proper faculties have of these several objects. Every faculty of man hath a natural sense of its own proper object, and perceives it better by its perception and sensation of it, than any philosopher doth by notion and definition. And all true delight and joy is begotten by a conjunction of some discerning faculty with its proper object: I say, all true joy and delight arises from a conjunction with its proper object. Now mind and spirit are of so pure a complexion, that they cannot mingle, save only with unbodied and immaterial things; I say, mind and spirit are of such a pure constitution and refined complexion, that they cannot mingle well, except only with unbodied and immaterial things. These two things are of certain



314 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

certain resolution : nothing that is apprehensive of God, or capable of God, can enjoy him in any state, without ineffable sense of pleasure : nothing that is apprehensive of God, or capable of God, can be without him or lose him, without inward bitterness, discontent and dissatisfaction. It is but an interruption that staves a man off from his discontent for a while ; for as he that enjoys God, being capable of him, finds satisfaction and heart's-ease ; so he that falls short of him, finds inward bitterness and discontent. It is a compendious violation of the law of our happiness, the averſation of a man's soul from God : in the ſelf-ſame moment wherein any man forſakes God, he ſuffers ſhipwreck of his own happiness. Our Saviour tells us, the whole law, is fulfilled in this one thing, *divine love*. Now, as nothing can perceive the ſun, though never ſo full, though it enlightens all things by its beams, but the eye that is ſun-like ; (*the eye of man is of a complexion ſuitable to the ſun*, and of all a man's powers and faculties nothing perceives the ſun but the eye, which is ſun-like ;) ſo nothing perceives God, *though he be viſible and remarkable*, but a deformed ſoul, a ſoul reconciled to God, a ſoul ſettled in purity and holineſs. Nothing but a ſun-like eye perceives the ſun ; nothing but a God-like ſoul perceives God.

*Laſtly*, It is our glory and excellency and perfection, to know and underſtand God ; becauſe, ſave in God, there is nothing but emptineſs, uncertainty and insufficiency ; nothing elſe is ſuitable and proportionable to the largeneſs and capacity of our immortal ſpirits. O, God ! thou haſt made us for thyſelf,

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our souls are unsatisfied and are unquiet in us ; there is emptiness, till thou dost communicate thyself, till we return unto thee. Therefore, I say, it is man's glory in conjunction with his happiness, to understand and know that which is better than himself ; and that is nothing but God. I dare be bold to say this, that self-denial, self-surrender, giving up ourselves to God, is a thing that our religion calls for : yea I am confident, that God would never have required this of any creature, to deny himself, to devote and addict himself wholly to God ; he would never have required this under the penalty and threatening of eternal misery ; for a creature to subdue himself wholly to God ; to deny himself, to devote himself wholly to God if so be the creature had a nature to have a self-sufficiency in it. For this is my reason for it. A creature, whose nature is self-sufficient, is incapable of eternal misery, because, it cannot be deprived of happiness : for while it is itself, it hath a self-sufficiency. Therefore you may understand, by what God requires, self-denial, self-surrender, devoting of a man's self to God, addicting of a man's self to him, receiving a portion from him, taking him for our happiness, that our natures have not a self-sufficiency : for if we had a self-sufficiency, a self-fulness, we could not be miserable, because we could not then be deprived of happiness ; for we had enough and as much as we are capable of, if we had a self-sufficiency. It is a grievous mistake therefore to think that when God doth require self-denial, self-surrender, and command us to addict and devote and determine ourselves wholly to him : that he doth  
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316 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

this for any accession that can possibly be made to God ; for he is self-sufficient of himself : but it is for our full satisfaction, and upon occasion of our shallowness, emptiness and penury, and because we cannot live upon ourselves. For it is well known that our goodness doth not extend to God, neither is he profited by our goodness, nor hurt by our evil, for he is absolutely independent and self-sufficient ; but it is to prevent our eternal misery ; for if we be deprived of God, we must be eternally miserable, because of pollution, emptiness, inanity ; because we find nothing else suitable and proportionable to the largeness and capacity of our souls ; and because we have not a nature that hath a self-sufficiency ; for if we had a self-sufficiency, we could not be miserable, though God should deny himself, but we might live upon ourselves, upon our own stock and store ; but because of our scantiness, emptiness, insufficiency ; therefore God directs us to devote ourselves and determine ourselves to him.

Now because all that we, finite, limited creatures either had or have, is in manner and measure ; so that we cannot have rest, fulness, or satisfaction in ourselves, who are contracted, narrow, precarious and arbitrary beings, dependent things ; but have a tendency, an inclination, and desire of the enjoyment of that infinite fulness and perfection, whereto we are admitted but to a slender participation ; therefore it is our happiness and the cause of our glory, to be admitted unto him. This is the account : because of our emptiness, shallowness, narrowness and not being self-sufficient, not being good enough to make ourselves

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selves happy (for the wisest of men are not good enough to their own satisfaction;) therefore God bids us deny ourselves, go out of ourselves, and devote and surrender ourselves to him; because there is fulness, there is satisfaction, abundance: but if we stay within doors, we stay within and starve; for there is not that which we can live upon; there is not that which is satisfactory to the connate desires of our immortal souls: for we have a tendency, inclination, and a natural desire after a fuller, a greater good, than we are ourselves. It is good for us to draw nigh to God.

Thus I have shewn. *1st.* What is comprehended under these two phrases, of knowing and understanding God. *2dly.* I have shewn you, by evidence and demonstration, that it is a man's glory and happiness, his perfection and accomplishment, to know and understand God upon a three-fold account. Hence I infer.

1. If this be, as I have reported; then let us learn the true employment of ourselves. Many use themselves to make themselves less; live many years and acquire nothing: for this is a true rule; we are so in act, as we are in habit; and so in habit as we are in act: according as our dispositions are; such are our inclinations and motions; and according as we are in motion and action, so we do acquire habit and disposition. Now mean employment and base attendance doth depress and make us less. You see of what low spirits they are that move in a narrow, limited, mean sphere of activity, that spend all their time about drudgery with beasts and cattle: no generous notion in them; but to think of God and divine



318 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

divine heavenly things, doth mightily amplify and enlarge mens souls, and make them of far larger capacities. It hath been observed, that persons that were of weak, ordinary, mean and simple understandings, of little reason and sense, coming to the perfection of religion have been notoriously mended for their parts, and enlarged for all business and purposes, even so much that persons have wondred at it : but the account is plain ; for religion raises mens spirits and enlarges mens faculties. Thoughts of God and meditation upon things divine : this doth mightily enlarge the parts of men : on the contrary, mens parts wither away, and come to nothing, if they be not excited and called forth to nobler acts by higher objects. Here is the reason why many live and die sorry ordinary creatures, and they glory in their contractedness, narrowness and beggary : but the reason is, because they know no better, they do not understand and know God. The proper improvement of our faculties, is to be conversant about God, to take divine and heavenly things into our minds. We cannot terminate ourselves in ourselves, but we lose ourselves, and there is no reason that we should be ultimate and final to ourselves, since we are not original to ourselves : for in nature it doth belong of right, that that is to be final and ultimate, which was original. That we are receptive and capable of God, this is the excellency of our creation ; and we thank God for our make, that we were created in so high a degree of perfection. Now let it be our care that all our powers and faculties be excited and employed, and that there may be no emptiness in us, unsatisfactoriness through our self-neglect. 2. Let

2. Let us then admire, reverence and adore and acknowledge God ; for besides his excellency, he is more to us than all the world besides : this will be our fate and necessary condition, if we have not a lively, vigorous, active, quick sense of God in our minds, but are alienated from the regard and apprehension of him ; then we shall have our faculties lost : for we shall have faculties without a proper object ; and if you take away the object, you take away the use of the faculties ; then shall you have motion without any rest ; for rest is in the center ; and you never come at the center, if you attain not God. Then shall you have means without ends ; and means are grievous, troublesome, and costly many times, without ends : but all the inconveniency of the means is recompenced by the worthiness and goodness of the end. You shall have streams without a fountain, beggary and necessity without any supply. Therefore I will conclude this point with two words of direction.

To prepare and qualify the mind for the knowledge of God, I propose two things. 1. Abstraction from matter. 2. Separation from impurity.

*First*, Abstraction from matter. Bodily sense is an impediment to the proper employment of the mind. This the *Platonists* were mightily sensible of, therefore they propose, that all young persons should be employed in the study of the mathematicks, to learn them to separate their thoughts from matter. Bodily sense is an encumbrance to the motion of the mind and understanding. They mightily complain of the malignity of matter, that doth depress and

and disable the mind ; that we are as birds wing-tied, while we are confined to these dull and heavy bodies : we have faculties that have motion upward, but we are encumbered. Where bodily sense is supreme, man will never ascend to the knowledge of God. This is the best argument the atheist hath ; that God is not sensible. It is the foundation of atheism, that all being is body : but whosoever deny God, they deny their own souls and their immortality ; they deny themselves, else they cannot deny God. They who live in the flesh in this sense, they cannot please God ; they do nothing to please him, because they have no perception of him. Where the soul is always encompassed with bodily sense, there is no apprehension of immaterial beings, no gust or relish of things that are spiritual : for immaterial things are only known by mental observation and abstraction. If our souls be bowed down to the things of this world, we are void of the sense of heavenly things. God hath given men souls, which naturally move upwards and apply to God, even as light things do ascend and heavy things descend ; every thing to its center. Now to induce us to prefer the state of our souls, and their affairs, before the conveniencies of the body, I propose these two things to your consideration. 1. Think of the mind's superiority over the body. 2. Its distinction from the body. 1. Its superiority ; for it is to govern the body, and the governor is superior to that which is to be governed. 2. Its distinction from the body, separable from it — Separation from gross and sluggish body and its sentiments, is necessary upon a two-fold account. 1.

*Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.* 321

As a preparation to the acts of the mind. 2. As a disposition of us to our right end. In short, they that are under the power of bodily sense ; they that are only bodily wise ; they that are no more than bodily complexion and constitution ; they are so dull and so sluggish, they are altogether unapt and indisposed for mental employment, for consideration of God and his ways, for any application to him, any enjoyment of him ; and so out of the way of happiness.

*Secondly*, Separation from impurity : for the *Platonists* tell us well, that it is not possible for that which is not pure, to be united to, and conjoined with, and enjoyed with that which is pure. No communion of light with darkness. No communion of God with the devil ; pure and impure cannot conjoin, no more than light and darkness. In an impure soul, there can no true notion of God lodge ; for this is most certain, an impure mind hath no true notion of God in it ; for that which the psalmist saith, is universally true ; *thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self*, Psal. l. 21. Every one thinks of God according to himself. As to instance : those that are insolent, usurping, domineering, arbitrary and tyrannical ; they think the excellency of God is self-will and sovereignty ; that is the highest perfection that they can attribute to the deity ; and they envy God, that in these he so far exceeds them : and if God would gratify them in any thing, it were that God would gratify them in this desire in a participation of his power. Again, the spiteful and revengeful think it is the greatest excellency to destroy by power those whom they hate : whereas *God sent*



322 *Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.*

*his son to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke xix. 10. So of all other sorts of sinners, the spiteful and revengeful are the most unlike and contrary to God.——Now purity of mind is a necessary disposition for the entertaining of God : for the persons that shall be made happy, our Saviour tells us, are the pure in heart, Mat. v. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ; and Psal. xv. 2. He that walketh uprightly and speaketh the truth in his heart ; those fit a man in habit to see God, Psal. xxiv. 4. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully ; he shall receive the blessing from the Lord. Isaiah xxxiii. 15. He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly. So Rev. xxi. 27. There shall nothing enter into the new Jerusalem which defileth or maketh a lie, they are kept out of that place, Rev. xxii. 15. And Heb. x. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. For as a blemished eye doth very imperfectly see and discern ; so a defiled soul hath no right and true perception of God. For every faculty is receptive of the object according to its own capacity and disposition. Every thing that is admitted, is admitted according to the disposition and qualification of the receiver. The philosopher could tell us, that the naughtiness and viciousness of man's soul, doth quite marr and spoil the principles of the mind and understanding. It is nothing but an unclean spirit, such as the devils are, that would beg and pray of our Saviour, that they might have leave to enter into swine : the swine, whose character it is,*

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*Men have nothing to glory of, but religion.* 323

to besmear itself in mire.—*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God,* John vii. 17. If you are of good lives and practices, and pure minds, you shall discern divine truth; and the meek have the promise to be led unto truth, *Psal. xxv. 9. The meek will be guide in judgment, and the meek will be teach his way.* For this is a rule which everywhere prevails, we have universal experience of it, that nothing can ascend higher in act than it is in itself in state and habit: nothing can ascend higher, that is, be more perfect in product and action; it cannot ascend higher in the act, than it is in state, disposition, habit, and temper of mind.

These two directions are as qualifications and dispositions: if you would have a right sense and apprehension of God, so as to be accomplished by him, satisfied in him, and have full enjoyment of him, such as may make you happy. Thus have I given you an account of these words, to *know and understand God.*

## DISCOURSE LXXXVIII.

## God hateth Wickedness.

PSALM V. 4, 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness ; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight ; thou hatest all workers of iniquity.*

**I**F we enquire how it comes to pass, that man is fallen under God's displeasure ; man, that was made by God, in the image of God, whom God made for himself, to be employed about him, to be happy in attendance upon him, and in the enjoyment of him ; how it comes to pass, that he is fallen under God's displeasure and dislike : the text resolves it all into *wickedness*. This is that which makes the breach between God and us ; yea this is the *abomination that makes desolate*, Dan. xi. 31. For this is an open affront to the maker and governor of the universe, a downright contradiction to him, a varying from that which is the quality and perfection of the divine nature. This is that which hath wrought all the mischief and disorder that ever hath been in the creation of God from the beginning ; this is that which threw the blessed angels out of heaven, and so transformed them, that now they attend upon advantages to do us mischief ; this is that which turned  
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man out of *paradise* ; this is that which drowned the old world, and brought down fire and brimstone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* ; this is that which did dissolve the *Jewish* commonwealth, and threw down the glorious temple which *Solomon* built. This is that which hath so sunk and debased the nature of man, and made it so unlike to the divine nature ; this is that which from the beginning hath made a difference between God and his creatures ; this is that which is matter of God's offence ; and until this is banished the world, the God of all grace and mercy, may of his own goodness have pity and compassion, but it is not possible he should have complaisance or delight in his creature, being become so unsuitable to him : but his creatures must be grievous to him, not only as necessitous and miserable, but as base and unworthy ; he cannot but conceive displeasure, whenever he takes cognisance of his creatures, because of their degeneracy, apostacy and contradiction to the nature of God, and variation from the state in which God made them. *Wickedness*, this makes a man an absolute enemy to God, and to all ways of goodness. By *wickedness*, a man passes quite into another state and spirit, and becomes an hater of God, and is also hated by God.

Whosoever is in love with evil, cannot be in love with the ways of goodness and righteousness ; for these are contrary affections to things contrary in themselves ; if we love evil, we cannot but hate what is good, because there cannot but be a contrary affection to a contrary object. Whosoever consents to iniquity, does voluntarily part with God, and God



leaves him. *Psal. l. 16. Unto the wicked God says, what hast thou to do to take my word into thy mouth? God will have nothing to do with him, nor does allow him to have any thing to do with what relates to God. Though he bids us to call upon him, to pray unto him, yet we must cease to do evil, and learn to do well, or he will not hear us. Holiness is the perfection with which God delights to cloath himself, he is often called in the old testament, the holy one of Israel. Isa. v. 15. God who is holy, shall be sanctified in righteousness, 2 Cor. vi. 14. There is no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, between Christ and Belial. Wickedness is fatal to men, it is the bane of human nature. Eccl. vii. 17. Be not wicked over-much, neither be thou foolish; why shouldst thou die before thy time! Wickedness ends in death, Gen. xxxviii. 7. Er, Judas' first born, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew him.*

I will give you an account of this great truth from the book of *Job*, the *Psalms* and the *Proverbs*; that so we may be apprehensive of the great danger we run into by consenting to iniquity: and I cannot take a more effectual course, than by shewing you what we have in holy scripture, the words of which are more commanding than any words contrived by man. *Job x. 15. If I am wicked, woe unto me. Job xxi. 30. The wicked are reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. The psalms abound with expressions to this purpose. Ps. vii. 11. God is angry with the wicked every day. Ps. ix. 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all that forget God. Ps. xi. 5. The wicked, the sons of violence, God's*  
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soul hates ; upon the wicked God shall rain storms of fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest ; this shall be the portion of their cup. Ps. xxxiv. 2. Evil shall slay the wicked, they shall perish in their own iniquity ; that which is their affectation, shall be their ruin and destruction. Ps. xxxvii. 9. Evil doers shall be cut off ; yet a little while and the wicked shall not be, they that look for him shall not find him ; ver. 36. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree, but suddenly he passed away, and he was not ; I sought him, but he could not be found. To one in the state of wickedness a man cannot say, God speed, nor wish him well in the name of the Lord. In this case we may pray against him, that God would frustrate and disappoint him. Ps. lix. 5. Be not merciful to any wicked transgressor, i. e. so far as he is wicked, confound him in all his contrivances ; but we may and ought to pray that God would give him repentance. Ps. lvii. 8. In the hand of the Lord is a cup full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same, but the dregs of it all the wicked of the earth shall wring out and drink them. Ps. xcii. 7. When the wicked spring up like grass, when the workers of iniquity do flourish ; it is but for a while, it is but in shew, for it is that they may be destroyed for ever. This is the consequent upon it, but not in God's intention ; for when he does plague, he intends a reformation. Ps. cxix. 119. He putteth away all the wicked of the earth like dregs. Ps. cxxxix. 19. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O Lord. Ps. cxlv. 6. He casteth the wicked down to the ground. Thus we see out of the book of Psalms, how God does declare himself against the impiety of the  
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the world, the wickedness and profaneness of men. Add to these some places out of the *Proverbs*. *Prov.* ii. 22. *The wicked shall be cut off from the earth, transgressors shall be rooted out of it.* These men promise themselves a portion here, and think to thrive in the world, but *Wisdom* says they shall be cut off from the earth, there shall be no enjoyment for them, no not in this state. *Prov.* x. 7. *The name of the wicked shall rot; while he lives, he is a burden upon earth; and when he is gone, his memory shall perish, ver. 24. as the whirlwind passeth away, so is the wicked no more.* *Prov.* xi. 5. *The wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.* ver. 31. *the righteous shall be recompenced on the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner.* All good men have God's promise, but observe what the wise man says, *much more the wicked and the sinner; for if good men do not meet with things answerable to their goodness here, there is space enough in eternity for their reward; but it is much more requisite that the sinner should fall under God's displeasure here.* *Prov.* xii. 21. *The wicked shall be filled with his own mischief.* *Prov.* xiv. 32. *The wicked shall be driven away in his wickedness.* *Prov.* xxi. 12. *God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.* I will not go on to other places, though others be equally pregnant in this particular.

But some may say, notwithstanding all these declarations, we do not find it so in fact; for those that are wicked, injurious, and oppressors, do thrive and prosper, and many times carry the world before them. To this, I say, we know not the length of God's patience, which is for our repentance; that is, an argument and inducement to it; in the intention of God

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God it is so, who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance : it were well if it were so understood.

Some may say, that all I have quoted, is out of the old testament ; but that under the gospel, God is more known by his patience, grace and kindness, &c. But it does not become us to turn the grace of God into wantonness ; therefore lest any should make this an encouragement to go on in any wicked courses, I will cite some places out of the new testament. *St. Matth. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ;* this is said to the goats at Christ's left hand : but who are they ? You will find them to be unmerciful and uncharitable men. *Rom. i. 18. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Chap. ii. 5. Thou, through thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. ver. 8. To them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, indignation and wrath ; tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil. 2 Thes. i. 8, 9. He shall come in flaming fire, to take vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of God, and from the glory of his power. Thus does the scripture begin, thus it goes on and ends, Rev. xii. 15. without are dogs ; who are those ? Sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, and whoso loveth and maketh a lie. And there is great reason for all this ; because these*



these men have made themselves enemies to God by wicked works, *Col. i. 21.*

I have heaped up these texts because atheists make the prosperity of wicked men an argument against divine providence ; and it is not so in these days only, but it was so of old. *2 Pet. iii. 4.* The scoffers that derided religion, made this an argument. *All things continue as they were ;* so the *Psalmist* says, *Pf. x. 13. They that contemn God, say in their hearts, God hath forgotten, he does not see, he will not require it, he is not concerned.* And this has been a temptation to good men ; *Pf. lxxiii. 2. My feet were almost gone, because I was envious at the prosperity of the wicked.* So the prophet *Jeremy*, though he was well resolved that *God was righteous in all his ways*, yet, says, he, *let me reason with thee of thy judgments ; how is it that the wicked man prospers, that he is exalted that deals very treacherously ?* It may be so for a while, but then they have their portion in this life ; yet there is no security : for none of them know what a day may bring forth. Also this is but a preparatory state ; the excellency of this state lies in this, that it is a probation and preparation for eternity ; another state is to come after this. Also judgment is not the proper work of a day of grace. Lastly, God does not reckon time as we do ; for *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*, *2 Pet. iii. 8.* These things I do but interpose as coming in my way. That, for which I have heaped up so many scriptures, is to shew how fully God declares himself against all wickedness and sinners ; by which we are to understand those who are settled in a way of wickedness.

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Yet lest I should discourage any that are in motion to repentance, I must tell you, that to be wicked, to be a sinner, an evil-doer, a worker of iniquity, are things of deep denomination in scripture, and do not take in those who from weakness, imperfection and indisposition at times, or from mistakes or misapprehensions, or errors in judgment, are overtaken with sin ; never is any one from these deemed an evil person, a sinner or worker of iniquity ; so that we are not all sinners in scripture sense. See how the scripture denominates sinners, *Gen. xiii. 13. The Sodomites were wicked sinners before the Lord* ; these were a sort of persons so monstrous and unnatural, that their sins are not fit to be named in a christian congregation : these are said to be sinners before the Lord. And this is the first time we meet with the word sinners in scripture : the second time is in *Num. xvi. 38. Sinners against their own souls* ; this refers to *Corah, Dathan and Abiram* ; who rose up against the very institution of God, and pretended that all the people of the Lord were holy. The third time I meet with this denomination, *sinner*, is, *1 Sam. xv. 18. Utterly destroy those sinners the Amalekites*, such as God had appointed to destruction. To go on, *Pf. i. 3. The good man is said, not to stand in the way of sinners*, *Pf. xxvi. 19. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with blood-thirsty men.* *Pf. civ. 10. Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.* *Prov. i. 10. If sinners entice thee, consent thou not* ; you know what is meant by the strange woman in the Proverbs of Solomon ; persons of desperate wickedness, that have sold themselves to do wickedly ;

wickedly ; that make a trade of it. *Prov. xiii. 31. Evil shall pursue the sinner.* And for the new testament, *Mat. ix. 10, 11. Publicans and sinners.* *Luke xiii. 4. Suppose ye that they were greater sinners than others ?* *John xiii. 4. The saying of the blind man,* which is much to our purpose ; *God heareth not sinners.* He was illuminated in his understanding, and brings an argument to convince the *Pharisees* that Jesus was the Christ ; *God heareth not sinners ; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.* So *Gal. ii. 15. Not sinners of the Gentiles.* St. Paul, *1 Tim. i. 9.* tells us who are sinners ; *the lawless, the disobedient, the ungodly, the unholy, the profane, the murderers of father and of mother, manslayers, liars, perjured persons ; these are sinners.* *Jam. iv. 8. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners.* *Jude 15. which ungodly sinners have spoken :* and these are called by our Saviour, *workers of iniquity,* *Mat. xiii. 4.* Such God will send his angels to gather out of his kingdom, and cast them into a furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Persons that are in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, *Acts viii. 38.*

We do indeed otherwise use this word, *sinner* ; we acknowledge that we are all sinners ; and so we are, for we have all weaknesses, failings and mistakes ; but I would not be so uncharitable, as to charge a whole christian congregation with the denomination of *sinners* in the sense of scripture.

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## DISCOURSE LXXXIX.

## God hateth Wickedness.

PSALM V. 4, 5.

*Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**I** Have given you an account, that *wickedness, sinners, evil-doers, workers of iniquity, &c.* are deep denominations in scripture, and are founded in malice and malignity. But that men may not be discouraged, because we are all more or less under guilt, in some way faulty or defective; this I dare tell you, that the scripture no where denominates a person from weaknesses, infirmities, imperfections, or indispositions at times; nor from errors in judgment, nor from shortnesses or failings in performance, where men do better intend, but do fail through some temptations, interruptions, disappointments. For we are in the hands of God, who *knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust*, Psal. ciii. 14. *As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*, verse 13. So, *Malachy iii. 17. I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son.* Therefore let us be able to say with *David, I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.* Though we have failed, not fully answered our intentions, nor fully performed our endeavours; not fully done what we should, nor accomplished what we



we would ; yet we have not wickedly departed from our God.

To make a man a wicked person in the sense of scripture, there must be one of these, or such like things, viz. *gross carelessness, voluntary consent, known hypocrisy, great apostacy.*

1. *Gross carelessness and neglect of God and religion,* so as to do many things without difference or distinction, without judgment or conscience of true or false, right or wrong, good or evil ; but as *Isaiah* says, *call evil good, and good evil ; light darkness, and darkness light ; bitter sweet, and sweet bitter ; draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin, as it were with a cart-rope,* *Isaiah* v. 18, — 20. *live wholly without God in the world, have no fear of God before their eyes ; no respect to him, take no notice of the laws or rules of action. This is to drink in iniquity like water,* *Job* xv. 16. Wicked men do any thing to satisfy an inordinate appetite ; never examine, never consider the nature and quality of the thing they do. This is to be a sinner, a worker of iniquity.

2. *Voluntary consent to known iniquity ;* when, tho' a man hath the knowledge of his duty, yet to please his fancy, or satisfy his lust, he makes havock of conscience, and puts out the light of God's creation in him ; such as these the apostle speaks of, *Rom.* i. 32. *who having known the ways of righteousness, not only allow themselves in wickedness, but take pleasure in them that do evil, who having in some degree, escaped the great pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, are again entangled, and turn from the holy commandment,* *1 Pet.* ii. 20, 21. Of these

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these I do declare, that they are even as bad as bad can be called ; for they are enemies to God and goodness ; and yet the third seems to be worse, our Saviour seems to account them so.

3. *Known hypocrisy* ; when men themselves know they do not mean good, whatever they say or pretend ; but they know, (or easily might know by looking into the grounds of their actions,) that they serve by-ends, and only make use of the name and credit of religion. These are *sinners* ; for they subordinate God to the world, religion to worldly policy. There has been a common mistake among us, as if a man could not tell whether he were an hypocrite or not. If any man thinks that hypocrisy is such a secret thing, I conceive it is as easily known as a man knows whether he be awake or asleep, whether he be in health or sick ; for what does a man know, if he knows not what he means ? *Luke x. 47. Wo to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,* the explication is, *for ye make long prayers for a shew.* Hypocrisy is a gross sin ; and if any man will, he may know it, for he may know what he means ; if a man do not know what himself means and intends, he knows nothing of himself. Now whosoever in the honesty of his heart means God, righteousness and truth ; he is not an hypocrite in the scripture sense, though he be mistaken : and though he name God ten thousand times over ; if he mean himself, or any end of his own, that man is an hypocrite. Thus I have shewn in three particular instances, who are *wicked persons*, and upon what account scripture denominates men such, and the danger that they are in, and the hazard

hazard that they run. I have said that we are all subject to infirmities, and in many things fail and fall short ; yet from these the scripture does not denominate us sinners, evil doers, workers of iniquity : but let men look to it, that they be not grossly careless and negligent in their endeavours to know the difference between good and evil ; let them beware, who sin against light and conscience ; for these persons have heavy denominations in scripture. And most of all, hypocritical dissemblers, who do not mean God when they name him ; or do not mean righteousness when they pretend to it : for whosoever is guilty of these, to him belong the names of sinner, evil doer, worker of iniquity ; and such as these are the wicked persons whom God has no pleasure in.

4. *Great apostacy*, either in point of doctrine, or in matters of practice. And commonly the former is in order to the latter, to patronize and countenance it. For no man does think amiss for nothing ; but men will think as they act ; and if not at first, they work themselves to it at last. 1. *Apostacy in points of doctrine.* We read, 2 Pet. ii. 1. *of damnable heresies, denying the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction ; ver. 15. who have forsaken the righteous way, following the way of Balaam, who loved the ways of unrighteousness ; they did not hold faith and a good conscience.* Either, if the judgment be right, that will prevail to settle and establish a temper, and to govern the actions ; or, if men be dissolute in practice, it will by degrees vitiate and corrupt their judgments. I never believe that any man who lives contrary to religion, has any true

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judgment in religion ; neither can I believe but that he that is right in matters of faith, will practise accordingly. For judgment and practice will comply one with another. But here I put in an exception ; I do not mean to challenge all alteration of judgment ; for there may be an alteration of judgment in some cases, which is not only warrantable, but commendable ; to which we are also bound. It is no religion for a man to act all the days of his life upon the principles of his education ; if that be the ground of his religion, he doth err fundamentally : that is not religion in the subject to sanctify men, which may be religion in the point itself : if a man only think so because his parents gave him such education, or because he was born in such a church. It is necessary for the entertainment of truth, that a man should entertain it in the love of it. It is commendable therefore, when men come to years of understanding, to examine all the principles of their education ; and to enquire into all matters of their former supposition : and if upon impartial examination, truth appear to the contrary ; if there appear a mistake, an error ; we must lay it aside and entertain truth. None of us were born knowing or wise, but become so by consideration, by observation and experience : it is a good motto, *dies dant intelligentiam ; quotidie depono aliquem errorem*. Every day, I lay aside, I rid myself of some errors, some mistakes ; for since we are all fallible, we should suppose that we may be mistaken.

2. Apostacy from better to worse in matter of practice ; which may be in these cases, viz. either for compliance with other mens humours, or to avoid



persecution and trouble in this world, or to serve by-ends and gratify lusts.—To comply with other mens humours ; this is a shrewd temptation ; many are tempted not to keep to their rules, on this account, because they find they shall be bad company ; therefore they assume to themselves liberty to comply and to correspond with others ; this is apostacy in point of practice.—Or else to avoid trouble and persecution. This can be no true reason for variation or alteration.—Or else to serve ends and gratify lusts ; when men come to resolve that the principles of religion are too strait to live by in the world ; and therefore enlarge their judgments by some device, that they may have liberty to enlarge their practice, so as that they may not be self-condemned. For it is an unquiet thing for a man to think one way, and do another way. It is a sad condition, when a man's judgment and practice do disagree ; to have a will to practise, a desire of undue liberty, and a judgment that will not allow it ; is to be under a rack and torture. For a man to study to alter his judgment, that he may be freer in practice ; this is to do the greatest wrong, to offer the greatest violence to himself. It is greatly advisable to be well-informed, and resolved upon good grounds concerning the truth and goodness of things ; otherwise he will do that hastily, which either must be undone, or he himself will be miserable. Therefore sit down, consult, be well advised, so as to take up a resolution upon solid grounds, either as to the truth of things which you receive as principles of knowledge, or the goodness of things which you receive as principles of action, before you charge

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charge your consciences with them ; for judgment must go before conscience. If a man have not a well informed judgment, he may indeed have a conscience, but it will only disquiet and torment him : conscience will put a man into a kind of hell, if it be not governed by judgment rightly informed.

But now obligation to truth is true liberty : it is a thousand times more injurious to a man, and troublesome for a man to be under obligation, either to that which is not true or not good, than to be under the obligation of all the truth which is from God ; for the service of the one is slavery, and the service of the other is liberty. Therefore I advise, before any thing be entertained as a rule of action, or before conscience be charged with it, that there be a severe and impartial examination of it : and that for two reasons. 1. If a man be possessed with an opinion, he has lost the indifferency of his judgment. This is the best thing we are brought into the world withal, to receive truth when it is offered, and to refuse evil when that is made known to us. And I would never part with the indifferency of my judgment, 'till the truth of the thing do evidently appear to me. For it is a great deal harder to be satisfied when the mistake is discovered, if a man has had his indifferency before determined ; it is a great deal easier to instruct him that is absolutely ignorant, than to convince one that is in an error, and is mistaken. I will retain the indifferency of my judgment to the last, while there is any uncertainty in the thing : I will make further enquiry, offer it to be debated and discoursed, I will hear all men that differ, but I will

not determine till the truth of the thing and the goodness of it doth appear. For otherwise. 2. A man brings himself into bondage. The service of truth is always conjoined with liberty and freedom; and it is a noble service, an ingenuous employment, *John viii. 32. The truth shall make you free.* But the service of falshood is slavery and drudgery. A man is cheated, couzened and disappointed; does that for the devil, which he should do for God; does that for error, which he owes to truth. A man that is in an error, he lives in a lie, so far as he is bound by his own vain persuasion, and fond opinion; whereas, to the thing, and in respect of God, he is free; this belongs to his very make; *contenditur pro libertate.* I will amplify and enlarge my liberty under God as far as God allows: I will not be a slave in my own imaginations, suppositions, dictates; but learn of any, take every thing into consideration, have no bias but that which I receive from truth. I will have the greatest assurance, have it from God, that it is true, or else keep it in the catalogue of questionables, and there it shall stay till I have further evidence. If a man be credulous, light of belief, run away with persuasions, he may live all the days of his life in a lie; or else when truth appears to him, shamefully fall off from his judgment, to hazard his conscience.

Here I have two things to say. 1. A man may offend in *materia libera*, where he may do one way or other, if his conscience determine him one way. *Rom. xiv. 14. Nothing is in itself unclean, but to him who esteems it unclean, to him it is unclean;* that is, by reason of his judgment, while he does so understand himself.

himself. So that through false judgment of himself, and conscience ill-directed, he may offend in the use of his liberty in a free matter ; not that he does err in the thing itself, but in that he does not govern himself by his judgment. 2. A man may be in some measure excused in a thing that is not right, where either he is ignorant or misapprehensive ; 2 Sam. xv. 11. *They followed Absalom in their simplicity.* Gen. xx. 6. God makes this apology for *Abimelech* ; *I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart* : St. Paul gives this account of himself ; *I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* Wherefore it goes far with God how a man understands himself ; it is much what a man means, unless he be ignorant by gross neglect, unless his ignorance be affected, or be subservient to bad ends and purposes : if a man be inadvertent, mispersuaded, it alters the case with God, it is no such provocation ; but we must be careful to inform ourselves : judgment must be antecedent to conscience.

I conclude therefore, and advise from the whole,

1. Take heed of gross carelessness and neglect of God and of religion, so as to do any thing without difference or distinction : for if you do so (as has been shewed) you are evil-doers, evil-workers, wicked persons, sinners.

2. Carefully with-hold your consent from known iniquity ; for this is not the spot of God's people, to do that which a man's judgment tells him he ought not. This I will not bring within the state or compass of religion : I take him to be an unregenerate man, who when his judgment tells him it is evil, yet



for ends and purposes, he betrays his innocency and commits iniquity.

3. For a man to denominate himself from religion, to pretend the honour of God and his worship, and to serve his own ends ; for a man to make use of his religion, or the repute and credit of it, for any other purpose than to sanctify and save his soul ; is to play the hypocrite. And, This is the next thing we are to take heed of (*viz.*) hypocrisy. It is the greatest sign of hypocrisy, to use such liberty. A man may be mistaken, but he either does or may certainly know what himself means. A man may be short in his religion, but an hypocrite he is not, except he design ill, and practise upon religion.

4. Let us take heed of backsliding or alteration in judgment when judgment has been well-informed, that we may enlarge our liberty for base ends : let us also beware of mean compliances, that we may be the better fit for the guise of this mad world : common practice is the worst kind of teacher. It is good therefore, before we entertain any thing on account of religion or conscience, to take great care, at times to use much reading, meditation, prayer, conference, that we may have right judgment of truth, that we may know certainly that what we receive on account of religion is an unquestionable truth of God ; otherwise it will be harder to satisfy us, if we be misper-suaded ; for it is easier to introduce light to darkness, and to scatter darkness, than to discharge any man that is conceited of an opinion, or to convince him of an error.

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## DISCOURSE XC.

## God hateth Wickedness.

PSALM V. 4, 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**I** Have given an account what kind of persons in the sense and language of scripture are to be taken for *wicked*. Sinners we all acknowledge ourselves to be ; that is, that in some particulars we fail, are in many things mistaken ; that we stand in need of God's mercy, cannot justify ourselves, nor stand upon our points ; but through the grace of God we may thankfully assert, that in scripture sense, if it be no worse with us than so, we are not stiled *wicked*. I have shewed what those persons are.

Now I shall shew that those that are wicked workers of iniquity, cannot have to do with God ; they stand at a great distance from him, and are banished from his throne. For as the eye which sees the sun, must be sun-like, *i. e.* clear as the sun ; so must also the mind that sees God, be God-like, and partake of his holiness. In an impure soul no true notion of God can lodge, no right sense of him : we best know God by imitation and resemblance of him ; for then we feel him. This is expressed to the life in that excellent book of *wisdom*, chap. i. 4, 5. *Into a malicious*

*cious soul wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin. The holy spirit will remove itself from thoughts that are without understanding, and will not abide where unrighteousness is entertained, for all froward thoughts do separate the mind from God, ver. 3. Then he adds a reason, ver. 6. For wisdom is a gentle, benign, loving spirit ; which agrees with what the apostle says, Gal. v. 22. The fruit of the spirit is love ; unless we use, wise, as the prophet does ; (when he challenges, reproves and upbraids) Jer. iv. 22. Wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge ; foolish people, who have not known God ; sottish, who are void of understanding : in this sense of the prophet, to be wise, is to be cunning in contriving evil, crafty to conceal it ; or as the apostle says, 1 Tim. vi. 20. knowledge, falsely so called ; the wisdom of the world, which is folly, madness. But, as Moses tells his people, Deut. iv. 6. This is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. So Job xviii. 28. The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. Prov. ix. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. It is observable that in the catalogue of most horrid, monstrous, and degenerate creatures, of which we read, Rom. i. 30. is placed, without understanding.*

This gives us an account of the *Gnosticks* apostacy from all grounds of reason ; they were without understanding of God ; for vice and impurity do corrupt and vitiate the principles of the mind ; man by  
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use, custom and practice, works himself into another temper, he does over-balance natural dispositions, impressions and inclinations.

We cannot build upon any report concerning God, which a bad man makes ; for if he should speak right of God, he would condemn himself ; therefore it is grievous to him to think that of God, which is true, because it is a reproof to himself, he is self-condemned, he is impatient, unquiet under the account or notion of virtue, he does not desire any such explication. Malignity to the mind, is what matter of disease is to the body ; the one spoils the constitutions of nature, the other abuses the faculties of the soul ; malignity spoils the temper of the mind, as matter of disease mars the constitution of the body ; a sick mind is otherwise affected, has another taste, relish, and inclination, than a man that is in perfect health.

Purity and holiness is the quality of the divine nature ; the filthiness of iniquity and sin, is the degenerate state of his creatures, at which God takes displeasure, upon which he does withdraw and leave them. No such thing is planted in the nature of man, but this is the creature's own contracted indisposition by abuse of himself ; therefore it is an offence and abomination to God. Goodness, which is God's perfection ; and wickedness, which is man's acquisition, can no more consist together, than light and darkness, health and sickness, soundness and rottenness ; therefore it is, that God withdraws from men of wicked and profane spirits, and that also the wicked take no pleasure in address and approach to God ; goodness expresses the state and perfection of the divine



vine nature, and wickedness is the acquired temper of the degenerate creature.

Further, This adds to the wretchedness of a degenerate state, that persons of naughty minds have no true thoughts either of God or man ; they think of all abroad without themselves, according as they find at home within themselves ; *Psal. l. 21. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self* ; for men flatter themselves and are apt to justify what they themselves are, what they do, what they delight in. To instance in three sorts of persons, the insolent, the spiteful, the crafty. 1. The insolent, usurper, self-assumer ; such think the divine excellency to be self-will, because they themselves affect to be arbitrary, unaccountable, to do as they list, and to have their will for a law ; whereas this can be no rule where any other has a demand of right ; this is no reason at all, *because I will* ; where the right of the case is otherwise, this is no justification, *I would have it so*. 2. The spiteful or revengeful ; they think it God's privilege to be able to do harm, to crush, to oppress at pleasure, to keep under : for nothing gratifies bad natures more than to be revenged, or to have others at their pleasure : as on the other side, it pleases good natured persons to do courtesies, to oblige by kindness, and acts of good will. But there are those that practise and delight in cruelty, and they think this is God's privilege. I never took up a notion in divinity to determine any of those points that are in controversy, from one that is of a naughty disposition ; for because he does allow himself what he is, he is apt to think so of God ; and as he him-  
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self would do, so he does imagine God will do. 3. The crafty ; they think it to be divine wisdom to lead mens apprehensions any ways, because they allow themselves to circumvent and to deceive ; such are apt to think of God, that he speaks sometimes what he does not mean, and that he promises what he will not perform. I wonder how those of this temper can believe any of the promises of the gospel, to take them upon his word ; certainly they doubt of God's meaning in what he says, and of his performing what he promises, who make that foul explication of *voluntas signi* & *voluntas beneplaciti*, that is, the secret and revealed will of God. In truth there is but one will in God ; this distinction expresses only the same will in different states ; the revealed will, is his will explained ; his secret will, is that which is not declared ; 1 Cor. ii. 11. *For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? Even so the things of God knows no man but the spirit of God.* i. e. the will both of God and man, not declared. That cannot be ascribed to God as a perfection, which is dishonest in his creatures. As the crafty attribute to God, so also to men, what they find in themselves. For he that is dishonest himself, can trust no body ; he converseth with others, as taking them to be such as himself. The innocent and harmless are not subject to be jealous and suspicious ; but they that are otherwise, are afraid of every body ; also as they are in temper, so they use themselves to violence, fraud, deceit, and falshood, throughout their conversations.

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This is observable ; scripture ascribes naughtiness of men towards one another, to the want of respect to God. Religion begins at respect to God ; he that has none to God, has no true respect to any creature further than as the law or his own interest does oblige him. The first obligation to honesty and integrity, is respect to God. If there be no respect to God, there is no conscience ; where there is no conscience, there is only care to maintain a man's self against human laws, or to maintain his own interest. *Abraham said, Gen. xx. 11. Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my wife's sake. 1 Sam. ii. 12. The sons of Eli were the sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord ;* having no regard to God, they offered violence to the women, to the scandal of their profession ; they used force to take what they would, not being satisfied with their allotments. *Jer. x. 21. They are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord ;* sunk down below the use of reason ; *Prov. xvi. 6. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.* A man may depart from evil as the unjust judge did from oppression, by importunity, or to approve himself to men ; but if there be no respect to God, there is no conscience. *Job* gives this account of himself ; *thou knowest that I am not wicked, chap. x. 7. Psalm xlv. 7. God loves righteousness, and hates wickedness.* And they that fear God are like him, are in reconciliation with him ; they hate all manner of evil : there is no approach to God, for him who allows himself in wickedness : unto the wicked, God says, *what hast thou to do to declare my statutes ? Psal. l. 16. so lii. 7. Lo this is the man that made not God his strength, but*  
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*trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness ; whom, verse 5. God shall destroy and root out of the land of the living.* Can any think that the most holy God can endure or have patience with the wickedness of his creatures, when *even the sacrifice of the wicked (Prov. xv. 8.) and his prayer, (Prov. xxviii. 9.) is an abomination to him ?* It is therefore advisable for men to deal honestly, entirely, sincerely ; that they live under the power, and in the constant exercise of, that which is true religion, and matter of conscience ; or else to let religion altogether alone.

There is nothing of ugliness or deformity in the whole course of nature (whatsoever men think, for they abuse themselves ; but) there is nothing monstrous, which gives us offence to look upon, and we cannot endure to see ; nothing that does defile or cause our loathing and detestation ; that is comparable with the hideousness and abominable nature of sin. For that which is best in its rectitude, integrity and constitution of its nature, is worst in its corrupt and degenerate state : no carcass is more loathsome, than that of man, because it is the beautifullest body when alive. The actions of man, if they be actions of virtue, done in reverence and respect to God, they are actions valuable above all the world. The sun's enlightening of the world is not comparable with an act of adoration of God, an act of vision or delectation in God. And by how much more excellent these motions of the highest creatures are, by so much more depraved, ugly, and deformed, are those actions which proceed from degeneracy and vice.

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But in the judgment of good and evil we are very apt to deceive ourselves by fond opinion and partial dealing ; *David* himself, when he had done evil, continued under the guilt of it a whole year senseless ; yet when the prophet represented the matter to him as another's case, he could judge impartially, and be severe in his censure ; 2 *Sam.* xii. 15. his anger was greatly kindled, *he that has done this thing shall surely die.* Wherefore let us measure good and evil by the principles of reason and declarations from God ; not by our own affectations and partial respects : for things do not alter upon our opinion ; things will be what they are, whatsoever we think of them : and whilst a man is under a false judgment, he is in no disposition to repent ; for no man repents of that wherein he does partially favour himself in point of judgment. Take therefore the certain grounds of good and evil from reason, which is the light of God's creation, and from the declarations of his will ; that so you may be able in all cases, in all passages of your lives, to judge of good and evil, right and wrong, and may not deceive yourselves by fondness or partiality.

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## DISCOURSE XCI.

### The great matters of religion.

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PSALM V. 4. 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**B**UT now more particularly, to do right to the text, it is necessary that I do declare on the one side and the other, what are the great matters of religion, and what are those things that will not consist with it.

And to instance in both kinds ; it is, *first*, indispensably necessary, upon account of religion and conscience, of approving ourselves to God, and maintaining interest in him, in order to lay a foundation of welfare here, and of happiness hereafter ; to do these four things. 1. To reverence and acknowledge the deity. 2. To live in love, and bear good will towards one another. 3. To deal justly, equally and fairly in all our transactions and dealings each with other. 4. To use moderation and government of ourselves, in respect of the necessities and conveniences of this state. To all these, our state, religion and capacities do determine us ; the state that God hath made us in, the relation that we stand in to God, and to one another, and our capacity ; all these determine us to these duties.

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Secondly, On the other side, I shall instance in those things that are the great crimes, that are destructive to conscience and inconsistent with religion, abominations to God, and high provocations of him, that are evil in themselves, so that we are universally and unalterably engaged to avoid them.

By that time I have spoken to both these, I shall have given a full account of the text, what that wickedness is which God abhors, and who those are that are hated of God upon account of iniquity ; and so shall declare to you, not what is subject to debate in religion and question, but things of indubitable certainty and unquestionable obligation ; things that are fundamental things, that are religion itself, things that are requisite in order to our preparation and disposition for the state of immortality and glory. I shall handle these distinctly, one after another.

1. The first great thing, is to acknowledge and to reverence the deity ; this is of perpetual obligation, this hath the greatest necessity, there is no dispensation in this matter ; for the sense of a deity is inherent in intellectual nature ; there is no instinct that is stronger than this sense ; no sympathy or natural quality doth more determine. This is acknowledged, where there hath been no revelation from God, but only the principles of natural light ; I will instance in one for many ; that shall be *Seneca ; nulla gens usquam est adeo contra leges moresque projecta, ut non aliquos Deos credat* : there was never any nation in any time, so much a stranger, so much an enemy to the principles of reason and good manners, but they have always had some belief, and made some acknowledg-

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ment of a deity. And he adds (for when I name him, I produce a man that had no more advantage than the heathenish world, than one in the wilderness of the world) *nec in hunc furorem omnes mortales consensissent, alloquendi surda numina & inefficaces deos* : neither can we conceive that the world in all times hath been so acted by madness, or by fury, as to take upon them to invoke something for a deity, and apply to him for relief, if they had not certainly resolved in themselves, that God is both able and willing to relieve ; that there is a deity, and that it is our security to make application to him. A testimony beyond all exception.

I add therefore, that it is the proper propension of the mind and understanding to incline to God. We have several propensions that are natural ; the con-natural propension of mind and understanding, is towards God. *Omnis intellectus deum quærit*, this is written upon this faculty ; our understanding seeks God, as any faculty seeks out its proper object. We divert our highest faculty from its proper use and employment, we rob God, and so are sacrilegious, if we turn our mind and understanding from him : it is violence, it is distortion, it is degeneracy, it is apostacy, nothing is more ugly, more deformed in the world, than to live without sense of him, without whom we cannot live ; to have no respect or regard for him, from whose goodness we receive the greatest benefits ; to have no honour for the father of our spirits, what more unequal, reason it self being judge ? *Mal. i. 6. If I be a father, where is my honour.* Now this faculty God doth undertake to teach and instruct ;



for (*Pfal.* xciv. 10.) *God teaches the mind of man knowledge.* And God doth not only teach and instruct, but he also satisfies and clears things up, and appeals to this faculty, makes this faculty judge; is it not comely? *what could I have done more?* *Isaiah* v. 4. *Are not my ways equal?* *Ezek.* xviii. 25. *Are not your ways unequal?* Abundance of such places of scripture, which do suppose this, they are in vain if this be not true, that mind and understanding have a peculiarity and property God-ward; they have a sufficiency, and they are specially under God's government; the mind and understanding of man are fitted for God, and determined to find him out in his ways, to follow him in his works, as the eye of man is qualified and fitted to see the sun, or the ear fit to hear sounds.

And on the contrary, without God and without providence, there is no living in the world. For in respect of all visible causes, there is no satisfaction; for these are either insufficient or uncertain: all other causes are insufficient to do what we stand in need of, or expect from them; or else are uncertain; we cannot be sure: if voluntary causes, then uncertain because free; and other causes may be insufficient; for what other things can speak to the satisfaction of our minds, can answer our desires? I say, what other things below man, can do this? Wherefore to believe that there is a God, is the most satisfactory thing in the world; and to be without God, is to be without all foundation of hope, or ground of satisfaction; for to believe there is a God, is to believe the existence of all possible good and perfection in the universe;

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universe ; and it is to be resolved upon, that things either are, or finally shall be as they should be : and this concludes all the evil in the world, and satisfies for all irregularity and disorder. Whosoever believes there is a God, doth believe there is that which is chief in the world, that hath the government in the world, and hath the disposal of it ; that there is an existence of all possible good and perfection, and that things finally shall be as they should be, whether we are in being or no. If there be a God, we cannot but suppose that he will finally order all things for the best, though at present they may seem otherwise ; and this is satisfactory. On the other side, if a man do not believe there is a God ; what faith, or what hope can an atheist have, who acknowledgeth nothing but senseless stupid matter, and the giddy, unconstant, fortuitous motions of it ? This is all an atheist hath to depend upon, to resolve all his thoughts upon, and expectations from. But what good cannot be reasonably expected from the deity, which hath an universal superintendence, by him who looks up to God ? what possible good, say I, may not reasonably be expected by him that hath an eye to God, from a being which hath an universal inspection, superintendence and government of all things ? For there is nothing at all can prejudice our expectation from God, but wickedness, which is a perverseness of spirit, an undue motion of infidelity, and of consenting to iniquity. For we have foundation of assurance, and ground of confidence in the divine grace and goodness towards us, that he will protect us, and finally bring us to perfection, if we ourselves do not

interpose by malignity and naughtiness of spirit which are things of contradiction to God. For besides our relation to God, we came into the world with God's care, and we live at his costs and charges, at his maintainance and allowance ; we live by him, are of him, have all expectation from him. Now God, who did begin by creation, he will go on and pursue his own beginning ; for God delights in doing us good, if we be but capable, and prove not enemies to our own selves : and this is a comfortable point to us, of grand importance to our encouragement, doth animate us in this our pilgrimage, and strengthen us to go on in a way of faith and patience ; to confide and trust in God, and refer ourselves to him.

But because I see what may be alleged against this, I will answer it by the way : it may be objected, why then doth not God keep evil out of the world, which he might do if he would ? To this I give you a short answer ; evil cannot be kept out of the world, but by absolute restraint and violence, which God will not use, because they are contrary to the plot and whole design of his creation. Now the design of God's creation of man, lies thus ; he hath made us, and invested us with intellectual nature ; so we are intelligent and voluntary agents. Now because we are creatures of finite and limited perfections, we are liable to mistake, to offend, to transgress ; by abuse of our liberty, we may do to God dishonour and our souls wrong ; so that this peccability or incidency to offend, doth arise from the imperfection of free-willed causes being left to themselves. The state we are in here, is a probation-state, a state of trial ; we are

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here in a state of exercise ; therefore we must not be with-held *ab extra*, nor restrained from doing worse as well as better, which would wholly take away all possibility of merit or demerit : but yet notwithstanding, God doth what becomes infinite goodness, what is answerable to the relation he stands in to his creatures ; he doth what will consist with the plot and design of his creation ; to which it is diametrically opposite, so far to interpose, as to hinder by force and violence his intelligent and voluntary creatures.

If we apprehend thus concerning God, that he is a lover of souls, and will do that which becomes infinite goodness, that he will fully answer the relation he stands in, to bring us to good, to guide and teach us here, and finally advance us to perfection and happiness ; this I may tell you is the first thing in religion, and upon this all other is built : if this fail, the whole frame of religion will fall to the ground.

2. The second thing that is indispensably necessary, is, to live in love and good-will. For malice and a mind to do mischief, are devilish things. It is the devil's character, 1 *Pet.* v. 8. *who goes about, seeking whom he may devour.* This is exemplified, fully verified, and made to appear in the case of *Job*, how diligent satan was to take an advantage : and when he had leave, how did he pursue his commission to the utmost extent thereof ; and make him as miserable as he could be, life only preserved, in which he was restrained. But on the other side, *divinum est sublevare, gratificare, benefacere.* It is divine and God-like to relieve, ease, and help men that are in misery, to gratify and to do good. They that are of this tem-



per, they do resemble God. All good natures take pleasure in doing courtesies ; and they take so much content in doing kindneses, that they think themselves beholden to the persons that do receive, and are ready to acknowledge an obligation upon them, if a person will receive from them, and be obliged. On the other side, bad natures will neither oblige any one by courtesy, neither will they be beholden to any. Whereas in the intention of God that made man, the second should be for the help and benefit of the first ; not another absolute, not another for himself, but in order to the first. It is not good for a man to be alone ; a help meet for him ; the second had special reference to the first ; therefore two are better than one, because of supply and readines to help. Moreover, man is a creature that is furnished with instruments for this purpose ; as I will instance in one ; wherefore is *speech*, but for communication ? What use hath a man of speech, which is his great power, wherein he excels the whole creation below him, but for the use and benefit of others ? A man needs it not for himself ; for man might live upon his own notions, enjoy his own conceptions, without it ; he hath no use of it for himself, neither doth he need it in respect of God, because he may perform all devotion to God by motion of his mind. There need not be other than mental devotion, if we were not to worship God in a conjunction of worship publickly and for others : wherefore speech (which is the great instrument of man, and next to his understanding,) is given to him in order to others. The worship of God is mental as to God, but oral is out of respect to others, where others join.

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3. The third great thing in religion and matter of conscience, is to do justly, equally, fairly. Every one looks for it himself, and complains if he finds it not. Why then should we not afford to all other men the usage we expect from others? They that do not do thus, they do take a course, what in them lies, to turn the world into a wilderness of cruel beasts and savages; whereas man, if he be as he should be, and as God made him, is a mild, gentle, loving, calm and conversible creature. If any man be otherwise, he is a monster, he is degenerate; for as God made him, he is a loving creature, delighting in conversation, as ready to give as receive; free to communicate and receive from one another, is the law of our converse. Whosoever doth not find this true of himself, he may conclude he is degenerate, he is a monster *in specie*; and monsters in nature are not more prodigious, than these are upon a moral account; and it is a vain thing, to put it off, as some think, to nature, we cannot lay the fault upon our nature, but charge it upon abuse of ourselves, bad custom and naughty practice, this is that which hath made us such as we are; not that we were born so, but have made ourselves so. Ill dispositions are acquired by ill use of ourselves, and become settled by repeated acts and customs; for we all have ourselves as we use ourselves; we may be ashamed to own ourselves to be born in the species of mankind, if we cannot say this of ourselves, *omnia in me sunt subiecta rationi*, there is nothing in me but what is subject to reason, and what is governed by it; and I allow myself in nothing but what ought to be. I am as God made me, a loving, gentle, calm, quiet being,

ing, fit for converse, fit to give as well as receive, to make due returns and acknowledgments, to live in a fair converse with my fellow-creatures. If it be not so, I am a monster, and I may be ashamed to own myself a man. For surely he is not worthy the denomination of a man, who cannot verify this of himself, that all things in him and belonging to him, are governed by the judgment of mind and understanding; and mind and understanding informed by the reason of things.

If this were our case of being in the world, then every one of us might know what he had to do in the world, and of what he might be sure, and how far he might trust; but through savageness and unrighteous dealing, it is quite otherwise; whereas it should be *one man in God's stead to another*, it is *de facto*, *homo homini lupus*, one man a wolf to another. Just as the prophet expresses it, *Jer. ix. 4. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother, for every brother will utterly supplant; they will deceive every one his neighbour.* This *de facto*, though by right it should be quite contrary; this is our great deformity, this is iniquity: God intended it to be otherwise, but it is thus in the commonwealth of degenerate mankind, and in the conversation of apostates; but in the heavenly quire, it is as I report God meant it.

4. The fourth and last indispensable in our religion, is to moderate ourselves in the use of the conveniencies of this state, according to the measures of sobriety, chastity and temperance; we must eat and drink, and make use of all other conveniencies of life,

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life, that we may live ; that is, preserve health and strength, but not live, to eat and drink, &c. for the end must always regulate, determine, and limit the mean ; and he who doth not observe this rule, but transposes mean and end (which is the most monstrous thing in the world) is an apostate from reason, and offers violence to his own nature, and takes up the very foundation of God's creation. For God made him an intelligent agent, and he is so far from being a christian, that he leaves not himself the being of a man ; for how can he be accounted a rational agent, who in the way of sensuality hath confounded the reason of his mind, hath spoiled the principle which constitutes him a man, has introduced a privation of his proper excellency, and destroyed the form which doth *dare speciem*, determine to the rational kind ; which makes as great a change, and is as great a loss, as when a living body doth become a dead carcase : for the body doth not make the man, but the mind ; and he that is alive, and out of the use of reason by his own disorder, is in a worse condition than if he were dead ; for he is alive to his own shame.

And thus I have declared the great matters of religion ; which are things co-æval, connatural with the very being of a man ; which man cannot be released from, unless God turns him out of his kind ; the great principles of conscience, the things we should be zealous for : but the mischief is, we take off our zeal from these unquestionable and indubitable things, and we run out in niceties and particularities ; which is a great mistake and shame to us.

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## DISCOURSE XCII.

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### The great instances of wickedness.

PSALM v. 4, 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**I** Am now in the *second* place, to declare those things that are matters of God's offence, of his hatred and displeasure; upon which occasion *he* parts with his creatures, and puts away his creature from him, *who* is declared to be the great lover of souls, and one that hates nothing that he hath made, but doth all things worthy infinite goodness to bring his creatures to good; and he doth fully answer the relation he stands in to his creatures.

Now those things that are matters of God's offence and of the creatures ruin, are such as do not at all agree either with the creature's state and relation, or not at all answer his capacity. And that I may speak distinctly, I rank them into these four orders.

*First*, Things contrary to the due respect and regard which we ought to bear towards God.

*Secondly*, Things that are contrary to the general love and good-will, which ought to run through the whole creation of God.

*Thirdly*, Things contrary to that justice, fairness, righteousness, and equal dealing, which ought to be among fellow-servants, among fellow-creatures.

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*Fourthly*, Things contrary to the sobriety, chastity, temperance, and due moderation of ourselves. And under these heads I shall digest all the immoralities that are in the world ; things that are perfectly contrary to the nature and spirit of religion, highly offensive to God, ruinous and mischievous to creatures.

*First*, Things that are contrary to the due respect and regard which we ought to bear to God. Of these we may say in the language of the text, they are works of iniquity, *wickedness* ; for it is our very tenure as we are creatures, to observe God according to our power. This is engraven upon every creature, this is the state of a creature ; to be fully and plainly subject to God, according to our capacity and power. This I shall make apparent from the consideration of what God is in himself, and what he is to us, and that in six particulars.

1. God's almighty power, that requires our greatest reverence, and most humble submission : not only because we cannot resist, for who can stand up against omnipotency ? But we ought to do it, as being satisfied in our own reason that it becomes us to do it, and as it is expressive of our duty and obedience.

2. His abundant goodness, that requires our daily praises ; and this is a great piece of our devotion, to sing praises to our God, to magnify him for his goodness.

3. God's infinite wisdom, that doth require our highest admiration : for we admire things of excellency, especially things of art and skill.

4. His absolute holiness, that calls for our conformity and imitation ; for we cannot write after a bet-  
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ter copy. We should propose to ourselves the best, if we would be directed.

5. His faithfulness to us, that requires our sincerest affections ; God is our truest friend, most careful of us, most faithful to us. We should not satisfy ourselves with counterfeited devotion. He is worthy of our most sincere affection ; therefore I advise that men would not satisfy themselves to come into God's presence, to confess themselves sinners, and to think this is religion, to make this acknowledgment. We ought to pursue these prayers, and every time we can make some progress in holiness and obedience, be more careful to perform what before we did confess we have neglected, be more watchful over ourselves. Let us not think it sufficient to confess and pray ; but we must pray and reform. For if our prayers and devotions be not instruments of piety, they are worth nothing ; if not engagement to a more conscientious and holy walking, we deceive ourselves, and dishonour God ; for the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to God.

6. God's calling us into being, raising us out of nothing, requires our obedience ; so God speaks by the prophet, *Mal. i. 6. If I be a father, where is my honour ?* It is the tenour of the fifth commandment ; if obedience and honour be due to earthly parents, certainly it is much more due to him that is the original of all beings.

Now unless there be an alienation of our faculties from their proper objects ; there be an alienation of our mind and understanding from God, (which is the truest sacrilege,) which are God's peculiar, God's appropriate,

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appropriate, God's reserve ; (for there is a stamp of God upon them, they are powers and faculties in order to God ; motion towards God, is their proper motion ; mind and understanding are for God ;) unless, I say, there be an alienation of these faculties from God, which is their proper object ; there will be no satisfaction to the reason of our minds, if these acts now mentioned be not performed. We may live in hurry, we may put ourselves off from ourselves, and reject the sense of our minds ; but whensoever we are at leisure, till we contract reprobacy of mind, there will, on reflection upon ourselves, be no satisfaction, if these acts be not performed ; for they are the proper use of these powers and faculties ; we had better have been without them, and these highest faculties been mere sense and imagination, than be alienated from God.

Of the things that are contrary to this due regard we ought to bear towards God, I will instance in three particulars. 1. To use the name of God lightly. 2. To attest God to what is false. 3. To use the name of God for base ends and purposes.

1. To use the name of God lightly : to use his name for a form of words, when we have no sense of God in our minds. We ought not to name God without some sense of his sacred majesty at that time in our minds, *nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus* ; do not name God, except something worthy of God do call for it ; unless you speak something that reflects to his honour, or something that doth invoke his direction ; for otherwise this shews that we have slight thoughts of God. I do not love to hear a man say,



say, *God knows it* ; if at that time he thinks not of him. Not but that we may use the name of God at all times, (for God is all in all to us) if there be an acknowledgment of his infinite perfections, and his grace and goodness for guidance and direction ; but that which I speak against, is, to use his name slightly ; when it is a form of words, and no sense of him is upon our minds. But the second thing that follows, is far worse.

2. To attest God to what is false, to produce him as a witness to a lie. *Jer. xxiii. 10. because of swearing, on this fashion, the land mourneth. Ecc. ix. 2.* Distinction is made between *him that sweareth, and him that feareth an oath.* Let men consider what they do ; for when they swear by God, and appeal to him as a witness that they are in the truth, in so doing they deposite and pawn their souls in God's hands for the truth of what they say, and expose themselves to all God's plagues and vengeance. For if it be not true, it is in effect as much as to say, *God punish, God plague and destroy me, according to my demerit, if this be not true.* And let us remember, that *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,* Heb. x. 21. Whosoever God is appealed to as *testis*, there he is also *judex & vindex*. Where God is a witness, there he is a judge and avenger. Now if there be so great caution and wariness to be used in case of swearing, which in cases and circumstances is lawful and warrantable, yea necessary ; that is, where there is truth in the matter, and importance in the case ; what account then can be given of cursing in the name of God, in such forms of words as these,

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these, *God sink me, God confound me, God damn me ?* If I lived in a wilderness, and had only the principles of God's creation ; I should think it would have been impossible for a creature to be so incautelous, to irritate and provoke the almighty, without any cause or any provocation. Swearing is warrantable, where the matter is important, and where the person is certain of the truth. For an oath is for confirmation and for settlement. But for cursing, we cannot give any account whatsoever. Besides, who can warrant cursing at all ? or whom should we curse ? Shall we curse God, as *Job's* wife advised ? *Job* ii. 9. a most villainous suggestion as ever was made. It is so horrid, that I startle at it, and am apt to question the translation, because of the uncertainty of the *Hebrew* word : but her counsel was bad, as by *Job's* answer. What, curse him *from whom we receive all good ?* Then shall I curse my neighbour, my fellow-creature ? that is *contra charitatem*, against all charity. For I am to live by love, and to behave myself towards others, so that they may be the better for me. To curse a man's neighbour, is contrary to the rules of christianity ; for our Saviour saith, *Mat. v. 44. Bless them that curse you.* Or shall I curse myself ? this is against nature ; it is connatural to us to do ourselves all the good we can : therefore it is represented as a horrid conspiracy, *Acts xxiii. 12.* that *they bound themselves with a curse against Paul* for Christ's sake.

3. To make use of God's name for base ends and purposes ; and this is worse than the two former can be ; doth exceed the other in malignity ; when (as it is said) *in nomine domini incipit omne malum* ; when  
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this sacred name is used to gain greater credit for wicked facts. We account it the greatest injury and wrong imaginable; for any to make use of our names, where we do not allow authority; and will not God resent the abuse of his glorious name for a cloke to base and wicked designs and purposes. I observe by the way, that this very thing hath this tacit acknowledgment in it, to wit, that religion hath the greatest reality in it in the sense of mankind; and that conscience to God is the truest principle, and doth import the deepest obligation, because so many give account of themselves by it. But then withal, religion is so noble, and so generous a thing, that it is not to be made use of to serve worldly ends, or be subservient to any low, mean, ordinary and common purposes; for it is monstrously unreasonable and absurd, to subordinate a noble end to the place of a mean. The end is always supposed to be greater and better than the mean; therefore religion is not to be subordinate to common purposes, nor to be made use of as a means to such ends. For this is contrary to the order of things, to misplace: and it is a monstrous thing to destroy the true order of things; and doth create disturbance in the commonwealth of mankind, as thunders, lightnings and storms do in nature; which suppose things are out of their place, and do exceed in measure. The proper work and use of religion, is this, to sanctify a man's soul in this state, and to save his soul in the future; and by these two, to glorify God. For this advantage we have in motion of religion; we serve God best, the more effectual course we take to bring ourselves to happiness;

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we do the greatest honour and service to God, when we purify our minds, when we save our souls : for then we are most subservient to bring about his gracious intention. Wherefore if any man lays to pawn his religion and conscience for security, and to give repute in buying or selling ; though I should not refuse this security, (for the obligation to religion and conscience is the greatest security,) because these are sacred ties ; yet I should think it reasonable to look for other security and assurance also, than these ; and a little suspect, because these are abused, and are in this case out of their proper place and use, the highest things for the lowest purposes : for the use and purpose of religion, is to purify a man's mind, and to prepare for the future happiness of his soul, and in this way to glorify God. Now if a man come and prostitute these to ordinary and common purposes, and pretends to give the greatest security, a security beyond the value of the thing ; since he puts these things out of their proper use, I think them no security at all, but it would rather give me cause of suspicion. Before I leave this point, let me only add by the way, that as our Saviour affirms, that he who swears by heaven, the earth, *Jerusalem*, &c. swears by God ; so likewise those that produce respect to God, conscience, or the name of God, do according to our Saviour's notion, swear by God.

*Secondly*, Those things that are contrary to general love and good-will. For this I charge upon you all, as a certain truth ; all of us ought to be in an universal reconciliation with the whole creation of God. It is not lawful or warrantable for us to conceive



enmity unto ought but wickedness and sin. It is a duty incumbent upon us, to be in reconciliation with the whole creation of God ; to bear general goodwill ; to live in love ; to be ready to all offices of kindness. Nothing in the world should alienate us from one another, but what makes a separation between God and us ; for after duty to God, which is the first obligation lies upon men, the next is great benevolence in imitation of God. Wherefore I conclude upon this account against these things, (as being wickedness and works of iniquity) *viz.* malice, and doing mischief, causing disturbance in God's family ; such as the great invaders of the rights of others are guilty of, though they be impotently applauded as conquerors in this incompetent world. Also make-bates and busy-bodies, *2 Thes. iii. 11.* who *walk disorderly, work not at all, but are busy-bodies ;* whom the apostle commands to *work, and with quietness to eat their own bread,* *1 Tim. v. 13.* Idle tatlers, *busy-bodies, speaking things they ought not.* *1 Pet. iv. 15.* *Evil-doers, busy-bodies in other mens matters.* Whatsoever disturbs the peace, inverts the order, prejudiceth converse amongst men ; is of ill quality, contrary to religion, to be avoided upon account of conscience towards God, and doing what is right.

*Thirdly,* Things contrary to justice, fairness, righteous and equal-dealing, which ought to be amongst fellow-creatures and servants : for there ought to be nothing contrary to peace and quietness, to good order, under God's government, as the whole world is. It tends to the dishonour of any magistrate or governor, to have things that are disorderly or confused-ly

ly within his jurisdiction ; it brings disparagement upon God's government of the world. The whole world is God's family ; God is the governor of the whole world ; there should be nothing contrary to order and good government, no beating of our fellow-servants, no insulting of one over another : the rich they are not to condemn the poor, nor the poor to envy the rich ; but among all there should be good behaviour and fair carriage, according to every man's condition. This is a law connatural to us, it is born with us ; by this law we ought to live in the world ; according to this law we ought to carry ourselves to one another ; to do as we would be done by. Contrary hereto we challenge all manner of provocation of one another by words or actions ; all words of scorn and contempt, exasperating language, as it is a thing in itself unjust and unrighteous, so it is very inconsiderate for one to despise another ; for no man knows how soon the wheel may turn : that which is uppermost now, may be lowermost by and by ; there is no man so mean, despicable, so liable to contempt, but it may prove that that man may have opportunity to do injury or courtesy : therefore words of provocation in all reason ought to be forborn ; all taunts and exasperating language. For it is as easy to speak a good word, as a bad ; to give a fair answer, as a churlish one ; a man's mind will be better satisfied in it. Now I instance in these, because there are other ways of doing injuries, than by fighting, robbing and stealing. To raise an evil report, or to carry it on, this is a mighty injurious thing ; for mens esteem and credit, are more to them than money in their

purse. Men should be careful in this particular, because an injury of this sort is without after-recompence. We cannot follow a lie at the heels, whereas goods taken away may be restored or recovered. What is ill spoken of any one, is hardly forgotten ; nor is it easy for the wronged to make his defence. Here in particular I must take notice of one thing, which I have always looked on as a shameful unaccountable miscarriage ; *viz.* to take an advantage against men from the liberty that is to be allowed and justly taken in mutual converse, wherein men trust each other. He is not fit to come in any company, who will not allow this as a rule of converse, to take every thing in the better part, to make candid construction, and to suppose that whatever is spoken suddenly or merrily, hath no ill intention. If a man thinks he cannot keep another's counsel, then it is fair for him to give an intimation and warning ; and then if men will not forbear, it is at their own peril ; the hearer is discharged. Respect to God, and fidelity to government and the community, is an antecedent obligation ; and against God and his country, no man is to be patient or hear. Therefore a man by the laws of conversation is not under an obligation to keep counsel, if God and his country be spoken against ; because every man is under an antecedent engagement and duty to these. Also, we are to be chary of the credit of those that are absent. We should be impatient to hear them spoken against, that are not present : for it is unmanly to speak evil of those that are not present to give an account of themselves ; the credit of the absent is not to receive prejudice

judice by the liberty of talking. It is commonly said, *de mortuis non nisi bene*, never speak evil of the dead ; because they are not within possibility to make any defence. If this rule be not observed, but men will make severe interpretations, or lie at the catch ; away with all converse. If this be not minded, then the good of company is under too great restraint, and men will take no pleasure in conversation ; because they are always in fear they may be mistaken ; misconstruction may be made : thus converse will be dangerous, so not pleasurable. This, I say, of converse between man and man, as our fellow-creatures, as qualified with power of speech, whereby we may communicate our notions, one to another. As christians, we are still under more and greater obligations.

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## DISCOURSE XCIII.

### The great instances of wickedness.

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PSALM v. 4, 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**I** Am discoursing of things that are contrary to righteousness and justice. Now we may be guilty of sins of unrighteousness to our neighbour these three ways. 1. By severe and harsh censure. 2. By perfidiousness and false testimony. 3. By cruel usage.



1. By severe and harsh censure ; rigid interpretations, hard constructions, whereby others innocent meanings are perverted ; captious, severe, morose, cynical, humourfome, uncivil conversation ; these things are materially unrighteous ; for what have we to do to judge our fellow-servants ? *With what judgment we judge, we shall be judged*, Mat. vii. 2. A man doth really pass a sentence of condemnation upon himself, when he doth severely censure any other person. If this were considered, we should have a far easier being in the world.

2. By perfidiousness and violating the rules and laws of society and converse, by giving false testimony. By God's law, such a person should suffer what the accused should, if he had been found guilty, *Deut. xix. 18. Haman* was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for *Mordecai* ; and in common reason

— *Nec lex est justior ulla,*

*Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.*

There is no law more just, more equal, more reasonable, than that whosoever designs evil and mischief against any innocent person, should perish himself, and fall into the pit which he mischievously had digged for others.

3. By cruel usages. These partake of the devilish nature ; cruelty is the devil in a compleat form ; it is an hellish temper. We cannot express any thing that is perfectly diabolical, more fully than in the temper of cruelty : I do find men have been infamous from generation to generation, and have been recorded as monsters, *Timons*, cannibals, enemies to mankind ; who have practised cruelty : such of whom

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it is said, *ingeniosi in tormenta*, witty to find out torments ; such as that horrid monster *Phalaris*, of his brazen bull ; and those who used these speeches, *sentiat se mori ; nondum tecum redii in gratiam* ; of whom it may be said, *exuerunt humanam naturam, induerunt feritatem* ; that they have divested themselves of human nature, and taken upon them that of ravenous wild beasts. It is horrid to think how the innocent harmless nature of man, may be altered to cruelty ; what a man may come to, by gross neglect of himself, by base use, custom and practice ; *Hazael* did not think he could have done those cruel acts the prophet admonished him of ; *am I a dog ?* Such an one was *Tiberius*, who delighted in torturing ; of whom it was said that he was *lutum sanguine maceratum*, a lump of clay soak'd in blood : *Caligula* made it his diversion to see men rack'd, and *Nero* to see the city on fire.

But I must do right to the maker of our nature ; and therefore declare that man, if he be right, and have not abused his nature, but is as God brought him into the world, and hath done himself no wrong, is a mild, meek, gentle, calm, loving creature, fitted for conversation. I am sure many are so, and have been so from the beginning, and grow more so ; and if any find it otherwise, I will say he may be ashamed of himself. I account that man, whosoever he is, if he be of years and understanding, he hath lived to little purpose in the world, and can give no account of himself, unless he can stand up and verify this of himself, *omnia in me sunt subiecta rationi*, all things that I allow, and do with knowledge, delight and consent, they

they are as in reason they should be ; the reason of my mind leads me to it ; and I do as I do, because my judgment doth first determine me. This in respect of all deliberate acts ; for, as for surprizes or mistakes, being taken unawares ; in these I am to be excused : but for deliberate acts, he doth not deserve to be named a man ; much less a person under denomination of religion, unless he bring it to this, that in all deliberate acts, he do with satisfaction to his own reason and judgment.

I consider man, *1st.* As God made him : *2dly,* As Christ redeemed him.

1. In the former respect, man is a conversable creature ; forasmuch as he is invested with intellectual nature, and is qualified with principles of *reason*, and with a power of *speech* ; for by all these he is enabled and disposed for converse : the principle of reason that works inwardly, thereby he is apt to conceive notions of things, and prepare matter : by the other, he is able to bring forth, direct, communicate, resolve, satisfy, teach, instruct, and make others partakers. It is a thing of the highest advantage in the world, to know what a considerate mind finds cause to think. I take this to be the best office, either of kindness or of service, that one man can perform to another ; that we may be as oracles mutually one to another. In several matters, one hath examined this, another that ; *ars longa, vita brevis* ; our lives are short, but matters of knowledge are ten thousand times more than the years we have to live. It is not compatiabie to any of us to be more than this, *aliquis in singulis, singularis in aliqua*, either to be a smatterer in more things,

things, or singular in one. He may teach in one hour, more than a man by reading or discourse can learn in many. The mind of man is more fruitful than any soil. Sow seed in a rich soil, and reap a large crop ; do but give a hint to a considerative mind, and he will work it out to a compleat form : wherefore it is great unrighteousness to be false, perfidious, treacherous, to betray converse ; for this is a transgression of the law and rule of society, that which governs our carriage towards one another, and is fundamental to all that we can receive from one another. This power of *speech* is an excellency that God hath endowed our nature with, whereof inferior nature partakes not ; for there it is only naked presence, not converse, if society of men be not for mutual advantage, to wit of help, of supply, instruction, direction, or comfort, or satisfaction ; then I do say the converse of mankind is to less purpose, than the bare presence of beasts, and is as insignificant. All this I have to say concerning man as man, in respect of the principles whereof he consists in the moment of his creation.

2. If we consider man as Christ's purchase, he is much more obliged to all good nature : for christianity casts a further obligation upon us to fairness, candor, ingenuity ; and there is no pretence to the contrary, but from difference in opinion ; and in reference to this I resolve, that foul usage of one another upon occasion of difference in opinion, whether it be matter of religion or of civil concern, is that wherein no man can justify himself, or satisfy the reason of his mind, if he doth consider. And there is a plain account of it. For it is in no man's power to  
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believe otherwise in any matter whatsoever, than he himself finds cause. It is not to be expected that there should be unity of persuasion in all things, and it may be no body's fault if there be not this unity of persuasion; it may not be culpable, or imputable to any fault or crime; for things themselves appear differently to persons in several stations. That seems to me to be the reason of the case, and the best reason, which seems not so to another: for this I will give you an account out of the philosopher. There is no man in any matter can give so great reason, but another man in the use of reason will find great reason to decline it: there is reason against reason in most cases. And therefore, *pauca respicientes falsa pronunciant*. If a man do not examine and take into consideration all materials, all principles, all circumstances in any case whatsoever, the conclusion he makes may be erroneous; so that we may say of differences of opinion, as the apostle of heresies, 1 Cor. xi. 13. *For there must be also heresies*. I will not say they are allowable and justifiable, if it could be helped; but I must say they are unavoidable, as things *are*, if it be but from the different make of our parts, which occasion different apprehensions which none of us can help; for, the make of our parts who can help? We receive ourselves from another's hand, we did not form and fashion ourselves, we are as things cast into several moulds by the maker of us, which will not hit and square together; and therefore it is, that we do not agree, but in several things differ. We are of several complexions, several constitutions, wherein several qualities are predominant, and

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and till eminent virtue be acquired, we are mostly bodily-wise ; the motions of mens minds will follow the humours of their bodies, except the use of reason and the exercise of virtue do over-rule bodily temper and constitution. It is only by wisdom that we are more than temper. I could tell what every man would be, if I knew his bodily temper and constitution ; if I was resolved that he doth not live by principles of reason and religion. Add to all these, that our different education, our several studies, our various employments, the different course of life that we lead, do form and fashion us, more or less ; and we must further allow for former prepossessions, long suppositions, early prejudices, which are not easily removed, nor suddenly altered. I must add one suggestion more ; there is difficulty and obscurity in some things themselves, and great uncertainty ; *difficultas intelligendi, partim à rebus, partim ab intellectu* : so there is a double difficulty in judging right, partly from the things themselves, partly from our understanding. Some things are intricate, difficult, obscure, and then there is a weakness and fallibility in our understanding ; so that there is a difficulty of abiding certain in the truth, upon both these accounts. Whereupon we find that very ingenious persons fall under different apprehensions in certain matters ; I say, persons of great ingenuity, and of considerative minds, that use care and diligence to inform themselves by converse, and by searching into things, yet are of different thoughts in several matters : so that they find cause to pause, suspend, to forbear, and after a long freedom of converse, to think of some things

things otherwise, one than another : now this is no injury ; therefore there should be no offence taken ; he doth me no injury, no wrong, that thinks not as I do in all things.

Now to all this that I have said, there is but this one resolution, in matters of religion, which are of highest and greatest weight, and of most consequence and concernment to us : we may maintain the unity of verity in point of faith, and the unity of charity in point of communion, notwithstanding all difference in point of apprehension ; and so fulfil the direction of the apostle, *let brotherly love continue*, Heb. xiii. 1. There is no allegation to the contrary ; it is spoken out-right, without any limitation. Now this I will make appear, that we may maintain unity in point of faith, notwithstanding difference of sentiments and opinions ; because we have a perfect absolute rule of faith in holy scripture ; and if we thus maintain this unity of verity in matters of faith, we shall do well, and all will do well, and all other differences will daily lessen ; or if they do not, 'tis no great matter ; yea, we may turn it into advantage, and make it matter of friendly debate. *Dic aliud ut duo simus*. For this we do observe, that a conference is ended as soon as it is begun, if persons agree in mood and figure, in matter and expression : and if there be not some difference, farewell to all conference. Then also there is no excitation of a man's parts, no use of his wits ; he doth not so employ himself, nor improve himself in converse as he might. Also without this, he may be more shallowly grounded in his belief, and more remiss in practice according to it. *Nil tam cer-*

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*tum quam quod post dubium certum* ; nothing is so certain, no man is so well resolved in any thing, as that of which he did before doubt, and which he before questioned, and had not before submitted to severe and impartial examination. I never arrogate so much to myself, as to think I am certainly in the right, because in my own thoughts I have so resolved ; but will so far make use of the reason of another man, as not to disable him by shewing myself affected and prepossessed ; but seeming indifferent, let the examination be one way as well as the other ; and thus a man hath the true use and exercise of another man's reason. We may observe also, that the church of God in this age, is most at ease and quiet in those points, which have been most controverted in former times ; and upon occasion of which, council after council was called. We in these times have the advantage of those differences, we have their resolutions, which we may also examine, and receive satisfaction.

Now that we may maintain unity of verity in point of faith, and unity of charity in point of communion, (which are the things I contend for, and none can deny) is apparent. For as for the first, that there may be certain unity of verity in point of faith, this lies fairly before us ; because we have a certain plain and infallible rule of faith in the holy scripture, so that that which is not there determined, may be put into the catalogue of things about which we do suspend, and submit to farther examination ; because the certain articles of faith are there determined. The latter, that there may be unity of charity in point of communion, is absolutely in our power, if we



we lay aside passion and prejudice, and guide ourselves by reason. For men need not fall out, unless they will ; it is but patience, it is but withdrawing, forbearance, kind usage, heaping coals of fire upon the heads of them that are most malignant and desperate ; and we are criminals, if we do not so. I add : if this notion of mutual satisfaction one in another, notwithstanding some difference, be not understood and allowed, we may be the worse for our religion ; for men are hottest in their differences about matters of religion : for the histories of the church tell us of subornations, false witness, perjuries, murders, upon this occasion ; when men branded one another with heresy. Wherefore I advise that upon the very entrance of religion, every one learn this lesson ; he ought not to go further, till this be learnt ; that notwithstanding any difference in point of apprehension, that may occur or arise ; yet we may keep the unity of faith, because of holy scripture, wherein all things are fully and clearly laid down ; and we may maintain unity of charity in point of communion.

But still more particularly, that you may the better carry away this doctrine, I shall leave with you *twelve* considerations, why, notwithstanding different apprehensions in some things, yet peace and right understanding ought to be continued between particular christians. 1. Our apprehensions are not in any matters whatsoever, no not in religion, as we ourselves would have them, but as we find cause. I cannot believe a thing to be so, because I would have it so ; but as I find cause. 2. Religion is a bond of  
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union between God and man, and between man and man ; and therefore cannot be an occasion of distance or separation. 3. Our sense of shortness in knowledge, and fallibility, where we think we understand ; should make us peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated. 4. In ways of provocation, we do not so surely gain the cause, as rather put it back. For there is no man so weak in his cause, or slight in his apprehensions, as to alter because of another man's passion. Yea, if a man be hot and warm, another doth the rather suspect him to have regard to some private interest. 5. If we are out of the way of cool and sober reason, we do an unmanly act ; for the reason of our mind, is the proper tool, for an intelligent agent to work withal. 6. We must however live in love, and bear good will, whether we apprehend the same thing or not, think alike or otherwise, agree or not agree in our sentiments ; if so be we live within the measure of religion. 7. We may not refuse any to fair converse, whom God may receive to favour and grace. Now I am sure that God does not reject any for mistakes, or weakness of understanding, or shortness of apprehension. 8. A case that is compassionate, is not severely punishable. And this case of misapprehension and mistake, is the most compassionate case in the world. For it is incident to the frail and weak nature of man, to err, to be ignorant, to be deceived, to be mistaken. 9. We would not think it reasonable and fair to be cruelly dealt with, supposing we ourselves were in an error, or were mistaken. 10. There is no more good to be done to one another, if once we part in displeasure. 11. If we do not unite,

unite, we betray the cause of religion to the common adversary. This I assure you, that the common adversary to true religion gains more by the differences that are between those that profess religion, than by any thing that seducers can alledge for their imposture or superstition. 12. And, lastly : there is a scandal to the world. For the profane will say, let the professors of religion be agreed first : and, we will stay until all are agreed. I conclude, that we should neither be scandalized upon this account, so as to think worse of religion, because of difference of mens apprehensions about it ; nor be exasperated one against another, upon this occasion, that there is some difference. For, *non eadem sentire bonis de rebus eisdem, incolumi licuit semper amicitia.*

Those who profess the faith of the gospel, are to be united in these two things. 1<sup>st</sup>. In loving the author and the name, whence the denomination of christians is taken : and in obedience to his doctrine and precepts, which is the proof of our love to him, *John xi. 23. If you love me, keep my commandments.* 2<sup>dly</sup>, In brotherly correspondence, and unity of affections, and mutual good-will, *John xv. 12. This commandment give I you, that ye love one another.* Therefore we ought to qualify ourselves, and to carry ourselves one towards another, as becomes them who hold of one Lord in chief, who are in profession of one ground and foundation of faith, who expect the same final reward of glory, which will proceed from the great prince of peace, who will reject all spirits of contention from attaining it, (*Rev. xxii. 15. without are dogs,*) for that doth taint the minds of men with sourness  
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and severity makes us unfit for those heavenly mansions, where there is nothing but harmony and content, love and good-will. So that I conclude absolutely for good behaviour towards one another, love and good-will, notwithstanding any difference whatsoever, as a material point of righteousness between man and man. For if it be a difference concerning religion, it must be so upon account of religion; and religion requires concord. For what is religion? It is *vinculum unionis inter Deum & homines, & hominum inter se*; it is the bond of union between God and man, and between man and man; and you cannot imagine that that which is the principle of union, should be the occasion of disaffection. We cannot pretend to do that for religion itself, which is unnatural to religion, which is contrary to religion, and which religion forbids. Wherefore St. Paul speaks of that which would spoil and marr this union, in which the essence of religion consists; *lest there be debates, envyings, wrath, strifes, back-bitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults*; so that here religion excludes all dissention, all injuries doing, all misbehaviour; excludes every thing contrary to peace, love and good-will.— If the difference be a matter of worldly concern, there are fair ways whereby all differences may be taken up; by way of composition and mutual consent, by friendly reference, or the sentence of a judge, 1 Kings xii. 7. Deut. xvii. 11, 12. The first will be a good way, if power be given to abate of mens right; for peace sake: but if they will stand upon their concerted right on purpose, or will have things according to their own will, I know not what is to be said to that.--



So that we see there is no cause for falling foul one upon another, exasperation of spirit, and provocation of one another. It is a great error, foul miscarriage in converse and keeping company, for one to do that which will give another offence ; which that we may avoid, we must use our liberty cautiously, according to the apostle's rule, 1 *Cor.* viii. 10.

I the rather insist upon this, because men do not usually charge their conscience in things of this nature. They call it but a piece of civility and courtesy ; but to neglect this, is great immorality, and therefore is inconsistent with all spirituality. Men deceive themselves, when they think religion is not concerned in these lighter and smaller things. All higher degrees of perfection do always include in them all lower and inferior degrees thereof. But if this be not sufficient, I aver that it is every body's right to be fairly used and handsomely treated : it is the right that every body is born to ; he may expect, he may claim and demand it ; and he hath wrong done him, if he hath it not. Another's good-will and fair usage, is every man's first due ; and therefore may be expected by every one from another. It is more every one's right, than charitable contribution to persons in necessity, whereto scripture is so abundant in exhortation : for the *quantum* and *quando* of charity, is submitted in great part to the contributor's will ; but good-will and fair usage is an absolute right to every one, without abatement at any time, or dispensation in any case.—Besides, this is in every man's power to give ; this may be done where nothing else can be done. For higher and lower, richer and

and poorer may do this alike ; and it is easier to bear good-will than ill-will : for good-will composes a man's mind, and he doth nothing till he hath an opportunity and occasion ; but ill-will is a wolf that doth never let him be at rest, hardly suffers him to sleep ; then ill-will is busy, and is always employed, so it doth ill employ a man : he that bears good-will doth imitate God ; for God is love ; so he bears good-will to all. So that there is no apology can be made for the neglect of this piece of righteousness, no man thinks he ought to be despised. — And as it is a man's right to be fairly treated with, and justly respected ; so if he be not, I fear it is his own fault. For the rule is true, *contemptus nascitur ex seipso* : a man shall be reckoned, valued and esteemed, as he himself doth value, esteem, and use himself. Men make themselves contemptible, as it is said of the sons of *Eli*, 1 Sam. iii. 13. they made themselves contemptible, despicable, notwithstanding the advantage they had by being engaged in the priesthood ; and that men may not be despised, let them take care that they themselves do not make themselves so, by folly and by vanity, by lightness and by ill carriage. Let not men make themselves despicable ; it is St. *Paul's* advice to *Titus*, *let no man despise thee*, Tit. ii. 15. One would think this advice strange ; for how can it be help'd, if a man be despised ; as if he had the government of all other men, a power to command and order. The meaning is, do thou nothing that is despicable ; for contempt ariseth from a man's self. Therefore elsewhere St. *Paul* recommends gravity, 1 Tim. iii. 4. Tit. ii. 7. Gravity, seemly carriage,

comely behaviour, to walk worthy of our vocation ; so it is generally charged upon all men, upon the account of religion, *Phil. iv. 8. Whatsoever things are venerable, comely, of good report, charge yourselves with them.* 1 Cor. xi. 13. 1 Cor. xiv. 40. A man should reverence himself ; have a reverence to thyself, for God is in thee ; that is, thou art made in the image of God, bearest his character and likeness ; therefore a man ought to have a reverent regard to himself, and every man else. 1 Tim. iv. 12. *Let no man despise thy youth.* Youth is exposed to levity and to vanity ; how shall he help it ? Let him follow the example and practice of *Elibu* in *Job xxxii. 4. Elibu* waited till *Job* had spoken, and his friends had made an end, because they were elder than he ; *I said, days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.* If therefore a man be younger in company, let him have a forbearance ; let his senior speak before him ; show some reverence to gray hairs ; let him have expectation that elder years should teach wisdom ; it is not comely for younger years to be too bold or forward. — We are in debt one to another ; *Rom. xiii. 7. Render to all their dues.* Wherefore there is a deposit from one to another ; we owe to one another a just respect. Whosoever doth scornfully refuse any man that hath made a fair application to him in any case that is worthy, he doth disparage human nature. All this that I have pleaded for, doth belong to this head of righteousness between man and man, without which there is no living.

I conclude this head with our Saviour's speech ; when he was asked what was the first and great commandment,

mandment, he said, *to love the Lord thy God* ; but then he saith, the second is like to it ; *Mat. xxii. 39. to love thy neighbour as thyself.* So that there is the like consequence of the due performance of the second, as of the first. Or shall I add St. *John's* argument, 1 *John* iv. 20. . How can any man say he is righteous toward *God whom he hath not seen*, if he is unrighteous toward *man whom he hath seen* ? The argument is this ; how can a man be righteous towards God, to whom there are ten thousand dues, whom he doth not see by eye of sense, but of faith ? can a man say he is righteous towards God, with these disadvantages, when he is not righteous towards man with whom he doth converse ? Here is that which we call an argument from the denial of that which is less, to the denial of that which is greater.— And indeed every virtuous action doth depend upon that temper of mind, which produceth any one. And therefore we say, *virtutes morales sunt inter se connexæ*, all moral virtues are conjoined amongst themselves inseparably. The reason is, because the exercise of one virtue requires that temper which is productive of all the rest.—I may add, that whosoever fails in these easy duties of good carriage and behaviour, of general good-will ; he will certainly not perform the more costly duties, of exactly paying every man what he owes ; which is fundamentally necessary in point of religion and conscience. He that will not perform that which costs him nothing, fair carriage, handsome usage ; he will certainly fail in this more costly duty of paying his debts ; and yet more, in doing all good offices, (for this likewise is a duty in-



cumbent upon us,) as he hath opportunity, and contributing upon all occasions to the necessity of others, as charity requires.

But to proceed, and to engage you further to fair converse and inoffensive communication; since converse is our peculiar excellency, and the priviledge of rational nature, we should therefore be very cautious in the use of it. For the inferior creation, animals, beasts, that are next below us, they feed together, but they do not converse; because they want the power of reason to conceive, and the virtue of speech to utter, produce, bring forth: and they that do so grossly neglect themselves, that they have nothing of sense to say, when they come in company; they are fitter to converse with beasts than with men. A feast is but as a manger, unless we speak sense, we meet no otherwise than as horses do at a manger; but by speech we carry forth, and communicate the notions, that our minds do, conceive, and prepare; so that by conference we receive the greatest benefit by each other, improve ourselves in an intellectual way.——

It agrees not with every body's circumstances, to contribute to a common expence; but this is such an expence, which is as of the greatest advantage to all, so to the gain of the spender. For the only way to make a man's notions his own, is to communicate; and a man cannot possibly make that which he doth invent, find out, and conceive in the use of his reason, fully his own, and make himself master of it; unless he talk about it, communicate it, and submit it to examination; so that good company, they that are most profitable by communicating their notions,

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do most improve themselves. 'Tis a gallant observation, *Prov. xiv. 33. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding.* And if any man be as wise as he should be, he will draw it out ; he well provides for himself that doth so. I would rather meet with a true philosopher, a considerative mind, one that hath searched and examined, one that hath thought upon, and submitted things to discussion ; I had rather be in that man's company, than in his that will entertain me with delights of sense. For, to please the mind, to satisfy a man's understanding ; this is worthy of a man, this is entertainment. And indeed we may value men by the sense of their mind ; for that is themselves ; which the things without them are not ; and all else, is without them. Therefore the philosopher saith, *omnia mea mecum porto*, I cannot be robbed ; for if I am myself, all that I call mine is always with me ; the sense of his mind, the endowments of his understanding, and the temper of his soul, these are carried with him where-ever he is ; and though he be robbed, yet they cannot take these away from him, no more then they can rob him of himself. Wherefore when a man appeared in great pomp and state, one said well, *loquere ut te videam*, speak that I may see what you are, whether an image, or a man of sense. When the question is put, *quorsum literæ ?* to what purpose is learning and education ? The answer is, *ne in theatro lapis sedeat super lapidem*, that when men come in company and sit together, it may be better than one stone upon another. No compensation can be made by any worldly circumstances or accommodation, for the  
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want of the sense of the mind. Though a man be cloathed in scarlet, and fare sumptuously and deliciously every day ; though he can command his servants, *go, and he goeth, do this and he doth it* ; yet this man is not to be put in competition with a poor man, that by wisdom can deliver a city. One man that can render a reason, or that understands himself, that can speak to the reality of the case ; is far beyond a pompous show, and all external circumstances.

Wherefore, to add a little more, what are they that are the finners against human converse ? Who are they that are the great offenders against this piece of righteousness ? These four do violate the law and rule of conversation. 1. They that are not peaceable, that do not observe order. For if order be not observed, there is deformity in human converse ; the beauty and credit of it is gone. 2. They that are captious, and apt to take offence. No man can freely speak, though he thinks of a sudden answer that is handsome ; because he must consider of it so much, that time must be lost if there be any in company that are captious and ready to take offence. 3. They that are not willing to give as well as to receive, and to receive as well as to give ; these are bad company ; these are reserved, and persons that are to be suspected, and lie upon the catch ; these are persons that are willing to deceive. 4. Which I must insist upon to be decried ; and they that are guilty of which, are fitter to be turned into the wilderness than the world ; to wit, they that put on those things in company, which for the indecency and inconvenience of them, others in the company are wholly unsatisfied

satisfied with. These are the spoilers of company; who bring those things into company, about which others in the company as considerable as themselves are not satisfied, either for the decency or convenience of them: and then there must be a non-compliance, of necessity; and if a non-compliance, then immediately there is occasioned a falling out; which is mischief instead of the good of converse. Whereas company is to accommodate and accord, that men may know one another for the better. Therefore it is not in converse what a man himself doth think, or what he doth suppose; for he may have a good opinion of such a thing himself; but this is not the rule, or to take place; but what others will accept. For, this is the rule of converse; neither say or do in company, that which others may be unsatisfied in; if you think never so well of it, it is not what you think, but what others will accept. We lay great stress upon those arguments that lead men either to what is absurd or impossible. It is an injury to put a man upon that which is against the reason of his mind; or which, if he do it not, he is counted absurd, and exposed to contempt. For we value our esteem and repute; and no man can vary from the reason of his own mind. Therefore no man hath authority in any free converse to introduce that which others are unsatisfied in; for the reason of any man's mind, is a law unto himself: if it be not according to his mind, he must dissent; and if he dissent, that may be taken for a condemnation and reproof. This, upon great thoughts and observation, I offer to you, as a cause of breaking up with great dis-



dissatisfaction. Wherefore every one is so to moderate himself in the use of his liberty, and so to use his liberty, that every one may be as free as himself. Else conversation is to mens loss; and the choice of men, and those that are fittest for company, will wholly withdraw from it: whereas if there be pleasure or profit in converse, there needs no other invitation to it. Converse should be so ordered, that none should go away out of company aggrieved, or sensible that he hath done or received wrong; to himself, his own mind, by compliance with the humours and fancies of others, contrary to his principles; nor to others by imposing upon them, as if his will were to give law to them, or as if his example were an absolute warrant, that it were enough for another to do it, because this man takes upon him to do it.

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## DISCOURSE XCIV.

### *The great instances of wickedness.*

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PSALM v. 4, 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**W**E are highly concerned to understand these things that give offence to God, that alienate and estrange him from us. I have insisted upon absolute irreligion, profaneness, gross neglect or contempt of God. Also, of things of unrighteousness in our dealing one with another, in our carriage and

and behaviour, in our mutual converse, I have already spoken something : I have still to superadd.

Three sorts of persons I except against, as unfit for converse, as enemies or burdensome to it, or else unprofitable. 1. The arrogant and self-willed. 2. Imposers and dictators. 3. The contentious and quarrelsome.

1<sup>st</sup>. The arrogant and self-willed. For these do so abound in their own sense, that if the choicest notions in the world be offered to them, they leave no room to receive them.

2<sup>dly</sup>. Imposers and dictators. These look upon all other men as below them, as nothing in comparison of themselves ; and so keep others at too great a distance.

3<sup>dly</sup>. The contentious and quarrelsome. These create real disturbances. Now with all these, converse will be grievous, burdensome, unprofitable. For this is the rule and law of converse ; give something and receive something : but these three sorts of persons do neither. 1<sup>st</sup>. They do not give ; because they offer no reason for what they say. Their presumption, imagination and conceit, that is their reason they give : whereas reason is the only assurance of truth. Who speaks not with reason, he as good as says nothing, tho' he says never so much. 2<sup>dly</sup>. As they do not give, so they do not receive. For they are so full of their own sense, that they are too wise to learn any thing. No man hath any thing good enough ; they do over-value their own, and under-value all other mens conceits and apprehensions.

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Wherefore it is not every man that is prepared for company, either to profit or to be profited by it ; but such an one as examines a-part. For he that never considers a-part, will not be able to speak when he comes into company ; especially in the great materials of knowledge, and the accomplishments of our noblest and highest faculties ; whereby we are capable of God, receptive and apprehensive of him, and capable to return upon him : and these materials of knowledge and virtue, are the things that tend to refine men's spirits, and to regulate and order the actions of their lives : and, which is the badness of this case, where men are not in some degree wise, they are not able to show a reason in things worthy consideration : these men are either fain to say nothing, or to speak triflingly to their own disparagement ; and it comes to pass that hence comes *foolish jesting*, which the apostle disparages, *Ephes. v. 4.* Because men cannot produce any thing of weight, they are fain to submit themselves to be a laughing-stock in company ; partly they make themselves so, and are partly made so by others.

A man would not run into company, unless he hath prepared what to offer : whereas persons of improved intellectuals, though they are at no other expence, yet contribute best in company, and are most beneficial ; since the notions of the mind are things most valuable ; for *wisdom lodgeth in the heart of him who understands*, *Prov. xiv. 33.* and whosoever hath skill, he will furnish himself out of this treasure. A man of understanding is a person of great value, though his worldly circumstances be mean and ordinary.

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nary. *Ecc. iv. 13. Better is a poor and wise child, than an old and foolish king. Prov. iii. 35. The wise shall inherit glory, but shame is the promotion of fools. A man that hath no sense, that hath not advised and considered, that hath nothing to produce, hath no insight into things that are of concernment. Prov. xii. 18. The tongue of the wise is health. Prov. xiii. 14. the law of the wise is a fountain of life, verse 20. whosoever walketh with the wise, shall become wise. Prov. xv. 2. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright. verse 7. The lips of the wise dispense knowledge.*

—Whosoever doth any thing without reason, either acts like a child, or like a fool : like a child, who is not yet come to the use of his understanding ; or like a fool, who is in a state of privation, who is impotent and hath not the use of human faculties. That is not to be reputed a human act, that doth not proceed from the judgment of the understanding, and the liberty of the will ; but they that go against reason, they act like mad-men. They who differ from each other upon reason, they come together when those reasons of their distance are satisfied : if a man differ from me upon reason, if I answer his reason, I gain him. For it is not so much the persons that differ, as appearances of reason ; so that persons may bear good-will, though their reasons do not suit : also men have done enough when they have given a reason ; because a man will not be at peace in his own mind, after he hath heard a reason, till he can answer it, or yield the cause ; for reason unsatisfied is an unquiet guest, and a goad in a man's side ; it will call upon a man, knock at his door, be restless, till



till either he hath yielded or given satisfaction. How troublesome to our minds is it, upon reflection, to think we have not done for the best? And so it will be, whenever reason speaks otherwise. There is satisfaction in reason, but in nothing else; not in will, nor in humour. If reason be on our sides, we have peace within ourselves, though the issue be contrary to expectation, and the success different. For we know that time and chance befalls all things, *Eccles. ix. 11. The race is not to the swift, nor victory to men of skill.* We cannot do any thing worse to ourselves than to go against the reason of our minds. Whoever acts with dissatisfaction to the reason that his mind offers, he will be challenged, self-condemned, unquiet. It is a certain cause of repentance, for any one to contradict the reason of his own mind.

Now it follows from what I have said, that it is a great failure in point of righteousness between man and man, to do one another harm because of any difference in apprehensions: for he that doth so, he doth debar the freedom of his own judgment; and that is the greatest injury and wrong: he deprives man of that which is his excellency and property, a right inherent in reasonable nature: he doth not allow him to think as he finds cause. For only a man's own incapacity, for want of self-improvement, which doth disable him; this only doth deprive him of that excellency which God made him to, to see before him, to know before he chooses, before he acts. —

Also we do one another harm, for that which is not in any man's power to remedy or alter. For while we conceive that reason doth require this or that, it

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comes to the case of *Joseph*, how can I do this wickedness, and sin against God? *Balaam*, who is branded in the new testament for a person that loved the wages of unrighteousness, yet he was true in this notion; though *Balak* would give me his house full of gold and silver, &c. when he found that God could not be taken off. For to go against reason, is to go against God himself: it is the self-same thing, to do what the reason of the case doth require, and that which God himself doth appoint. Reason, which is God's vice-gerent in the government of the world, it hath God's commission and authority with it; what this speaks, God owns; it is the very voice of God himself; for he is the highest intelligence. By contradiction to reason, men are challenged within themselves at present, and will be condemned hereafter at the great day of judgment. I fear nothing at the day of judgment, but what the reason of my mind will challenge and controul. It is the reason of mens minds that condemns, not God's power. For we are not obnoxious to God by his power; for by his power he hurts none; but condemnation ariseth from a man's own guilt, and his own reason condemns him; and without this condemnation of a man's own reason, there is nothing in the world formidable; for God's power is directed by his wisdom, limited by his goodness, and never acts out of ways of justice and truth. But I shall be here confounded and broken, when I cannot approve myself to the reason of my own mind. Therefore it is not safe to admit evil, unless ourselves do not know it. If any one would sin, let him take care of this, that himself do not know

know it. It is not enough that he be in private, that no man else know it; *fear thyself*; thou art more in danger from the reproof and condemnation of thy own judgment and understanding, than from any power without thee, either of God or of men: wherefore do not offend, unless thou canst offend so, as thou thyself shall not know it. Wherefore it is materially unrighteous, to impose on others either to think or to do, as we think or do. It is oppression, cruelty, arrogance, all that is unbecoming human nature, to do because I do, to think because I think. It is to deprive men of their native right, to put them upon doing what they cannot do, to dispossess them of themselves. For after all struggling with mens selves they must think as they see reason. If I could but think otherwise than the reason of my mind tells me, I should not be in danger of hell itself.

There is but one objection to this. Persons delivered up to reprobacy of mind, through their holding truth in unrighteousness. I answer to this, that this is a monstrous and unnatural state; and this is a rule with us, and it is universally true, that monsters do not alter the definitions of things in their kind, neither do they at all detract from the connatural perfections: I therefore absolutely conclude for fair usage and just respect to be shewn, as every one's due and first right.

I conclude this upon the whole matter; withhold from none their birth-right, freedom of judgment, difference of apprehensions. To dispossess men of any of these, is unjust. Wherefore, fair carriage, handsome usage, and just respect to one another, these

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these I charge upon you upon account of righteous dealing one with another. For this is every one's due. Justice is not done, if it be not thus. Nothing can be alleged to the contrary. In the case of different apprehensions, if we confine ourselves to the use of reason (which is what in all cases we ought to do,) we shall either upon a fair debate agree, or not materially differ, or part without offence. I speak of men of education and parts, men that have considered; for these are they that confine themselves to the measures and bounds of reason: and this is the law of all converse; and if this law be observed, we shall upon a fair debate of things, either agree, or else part without offence; and we are gainers both ways. I will make it thus out. Reason is an uniform principle, constant and the same; and whosoever speaks reason, speaks to another man's reason, and it cannot be refused; it must be accepted, it must be acknowledged. Reason, as it is the perfection of our souls, so it is the rule and law to all mens minds: this advantage at least it will afford, that we shall make each other more moderate in our opinions when we disagree, less fierce, and consequently more placable and reconcileable, better satisfied each in other; since it will upon a fair debate appear, when men speak reason and sense, that neither persons are out of the way, and that it is not will, humour or fancy, or any impotent thing, but the reason of the case that keeps them asunder.

Now that we ought to tie ourselves in our converse one with another, to the use of reason, and of the laws and measures thereof, is apparent; because rea-



son is the only tool we have to work withal, if we do man's work. The violence of passion, storming, threatening, controuling, thoughts of revenge, these are quite out of the way of reason, or of christianity. For, *Mat. v. 44.* we are to *do good to those who despitefully use us.* Now by the way I ask, how do they observe this known plain rule and law of christianity, who upon any provocation presently send a challenge? They are concerned in point of honour to the hazard of their own lives. For when men challenge, it is one to one; they expose themselves, so they run an equal hazard whether they shall live or not; and though there were a provocation, yet with God this allegation is insufficient, because we ought to forbear and have patience. I put it down for a certain rule, that persons of weighed reason, will neither provoke, nor be provoked. For provocation is the effect of ungoverned passion, on one side and the other; as well in him that receives the offence, as in him that gives. It is in thy power not to resent, and by a candid interpretation to turn an injury into a courtesy; and to mend that by fair interpretation, which was ill-meant. It is never well in the life of man, when reason doth not go first; and when it doth not govern all along: passion ought to have no place, but in pursuit of reason. I add, laws themselves are the dictates of reason: and in authority thereof they determine our liberty, with regard to grosser acts of unrighteousness, as *theft, adultery, murder, &c.* which are so gross, that even the laws of heathens controul and condemn them. But in this point of unrighteousness, *not giving fair usage one to another,* there  
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are persons that are of more refined spirits, of better lives, that do abhor the other gross and violent ways of unrighteousness, who yet do too much fail in this, for want of consideration. I may add also ; differences among men will happen. We may suppose it thro' mens weakness, inadvertency, passion ; but they are unhappy men who do occasion them ; for they are the causes of their own, and other mens harm : but peace-makers, reconcilers, and those that are preventers of mens falling out, are God's instruments for good in the world, and subservient to him to employ themselves in this work. He doth God's work, and acts under him, who moves toward peace ; who so governs his own spirit, and helps to the composing of other mens spirits. This is a man of the greatest power, virtue, and excellency. Boisterous persons, they are impotent, are as a troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt ; for all undue motion of passion, is weakness and disorder.—— I know, that by persons who do not consider, the great conquerors, and those that make the great havock in the world, are applauded and magnified, are esteemed persons of courage ; but I will undertake in God's account they are falsely so called ; they are the disturbers of mankind, creators of disorder in the family of God. For God is the God of peace ; and his work is to keep peace and order ; *tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia* : and they who are subservient therein, are his agents and ministers. Storms, tempests, and hurricanes, they make the greatest noise in the world natural ; and are most taken notice of ; but they are the things that do the greatest mischiefs.

Whereas fair, gentle and calm weather, draws forth the fruits of the earth, for the use of man and beast. The true ornament of a man's mind, is a meek and quiet spirit ; he that is of a cool temper, is of an excellent spirit, *Prov. xvii. 27.* Those who are otherwise, whatsoever they do, they do it with violence and impotence ; and if it happen to be right, well and good ; but whether right or wrong, these persons carry it on with violence and cruelty : and I am sure this way of acting, is contrary to our Saviours rule, when, in our communication one with another, he will have nothing beyond *yea* and *nay* ; for *whatsoever is more than this, proceeds from evil*, (that is true,) *and tends to it*, *Mat. v. 37.* *It proceeds from evil* ; for it is the effect of haughtiness, arrogancy, self-assuming, which doth not become a frail and fallible mortal, that thinks and unthinks, that thinks one day this, another day that ; and, if not arrogance, it is rashness and inconsiderateness at least ; and it doth not become any man thus to act, thus to behave himself ; because if he knows himself, he knows how liable he is to be mistaken, and how very uncertain he is to perform. It doth also *tend to evil*, because it peremptorily engages a man, when as he might find cause to do otherwise, and to wish he had not so far engaged, but had retained his liberty. We often change our minds : for second thoughts are wisest commonly upon further consideration ; therefore it *tends to evil*, because it engages a man further, and to do that, which when a man comes to do upon second thoughts, he wishes he had not so far engaged, but retained his liberty.

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## DISCOURSE XCV.

The great instances of wickedness.

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PSALM v. 4. 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**I** Proceed now to declare that a man is naturally qualified for this fairness in converse, for such usage of men as I have spoken of. A man is fitted for converse, by the principles whereof human nature doth consist; for he consists of two excellencies, wherein he is transcendent to all the creation below him.

1. In the first place, *the reason of his mind*; in the use whereof he works inwardly, employs himself within himself, puts himself into stock, excites the virtue and vigour of his nature, improves himself, he gets what he may after expend; or which he may make use of when he comes into company.

2. *The gift of speech*; whereby men communicate their inward conceptions, and give light one to another; so it makes society both pleasurable and profitable; for there is nothing better than for a man to hear reason, which is *animæ pabulum*, the food of souls; for by speaking in a way of reason, we lay open ourselves, turn ourselves inside out, come to know one another's sense, express our thoughts, and



hereby declare our apprehensions of things : so that if there be but one wise man in the company, he hath an opportunity to make all the others so too. By *speaking*, we come to know and understand one another's mind and resolutions in cases before us ; by converse we relieve one another in our sorrows, and admit others to a share in our joys ; by speech we reveal our secrets, and we join our counsel, carry on our bargains for interchange of commodities, and make agreements for mutual defence and security ; in which things consists the use, pleasure and advantage of society and converse ; for it is a poor thing for a man to be wise only for himself.

Now to give strength to all this ; of all creatures in this lower world, we stand most in need ; for other creatures are sooner able to supply themselves, than man is ; the young of all sorts, without direction, soon find the dam's dugg. Man's security is only this, that he is born into the arms of reason and loving affection ; such are parents, tender and solicitous for the good of their off-spring. For a man himself, for days and months, I may say, years, is no way self-sufficient. Also there being many more necessities and conveniencies requisite in the life of man, and for his welfare, with which we cannot be supplied without the aid and assistance of others ; therefore fair correspondence and handsome treating of one another, is very necessary. It is true, that man, in his accomplished estate, is furnished the best of all animals ; because by the reason of his mind he can outwit them all, and he can turn the defences of other creatures against themselves ; disrobe them, and make them

them his instruments to tame and over-rule them : but without the contribution of others, his fellows in the same image, and his right settled by law and reason, which is peculiar to his kind ; he is worst provided of all. For his wants are many, his ails more, and the violence and wrong he is exposed to, not to be repelled by his own prudence and strength. Upon which and the following considerations, society is to be looked upon as a means of supplement and security. For we are apt to grow into discontent, if we be too much retired ; we are apt to be morose, cynical, and sour. It is a thousand to one, no man will live well alone, neither as to himself, nor as to God. Every other man is a help ; this was the foundation of the second, *a help meet for man*. Now converse tends to dispose to friendliness and great benevolence, as well as to polish and cultivate the nature of man. For knowledge is vast and infinite ; it is not compatible to us, considering the shortness of our lives, and our many incumbrances, to be skilled in every thing. Wherefore every other man, which is of improvement, is profitable to every body he converses with. Even amongst those that are the greatest scholars, they get more by keeping company and discoursing together, than by all their reading. So that by converse a man is bettered in himself, and made more suitable to others ; for company *aut invenit aut facit*. Converse doth assimilate. Therefore we give this for a rule, *noscitur ex socio qui non dignoscitur ex se* ; if a man is not known himself what he is, you may know him by his company. Therefore we ought to behave ourselves towards one another, that we may  
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be acceptable, and our converse desirable, as in civil, so religious concerns. What is done by friendliness and courtesy, by meekness and gentleness, is easily done, and is most beneficial to the receiver. The best discharge of a man's self towards another upon account of religion, is to render a reason of the hope that is in him, *1 Pet. iii. 15.*

Upon the whole, it is very necessary to observe the laws of converse ; and to this purpose I will give you nine or ten rules, which we must have a regard to in our converse. 1. Not to prefer interest in particular, before interest in common. Every one hath of both sorts. The good of the publick, is more to every one, than his private concernment. He that serves the publick best, doth best secure his own private. For private signifies nothing, if the publick be lost ; for what is my cabin, if the ship sinks ; if I be good-natured, I cannot enjoy myself when I see others about me miserable. 2. Since the use of words is to convey meanings, words being an instrument of intercourse and society ; we should by outward expressions truly signify our minds, our intention ; and not lie, dissemble or equivocate. For else what doth communication in society amount to ? No more understanding than in the confusion of languages at the building of *Babel*. As good there were no speech, if men do not convey the meaning of their language by their words : for what doth it profit any, to be deceived with words and phrases, when there is no intention. 3. Since a good name is the ground of the trust one man reposeth in another, and the foundation of mens credit which may be more than their  
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stock, and the best part of their livelihood ; (for many live more by their credit, than by their money in their purse ;) till a man has forfeited his good name by any false or treacherous act, he is to be well spoken of and reputed *vir bonus & legalis*, till found in a crime. *Quilibet præsumitur esse bonus*, and charity hopeth all things. 4. Neither by false testimony, nor open slanders, nor private whisperings, nor by back-bitings, nor by spiteful representations, to taint an innocent person's reputation. For these are of the evil one, the devil, who rose up and misrepresented *Job* ; yea he did traduce the whole generation of the righteous. *Job* i. 11. who is the accuser of the brethren, *Rev.* xii. 10. the enemy who soweth tares in God's field, *Mat.* xiii. 25. Now these injuries in the moral world, are beyond any violence in the natural world. For in this case it is *homo homini lupus* ; one man is a wolf to another, and so better be alone. 5. Since one man to another, is no more than his word ; not to promise what a man doth not mean to perform ; nor, if a man's word be once passed, to go back from it again. For promises are the security of intercourse and society. We depend upon mens promises, and we promise others upon promises made to us : therefore we must fail, if others fail us. Therefore we cannot see how deep an injury this is, how far it may run, for men to falsify their words, or not to perform what they promise. For this I observe ; the noblest, bravest, worthiest persons, they carry it so that their word is as good as their deed ; and their principle, by which they live, is, upon no terms to violate faith and truth ; though others stand not so much



much upon it, yet men of reason and conscience stand upon it to the full ; with these, to be disappointed is grievous, who do not allow themselves to disappoint. 6. Since in dealing one with another, there is a mutual trust in one another's sincerity, and confidence accordingly ; we are not to take advantage either from the ignorance or inexperience of any, nor to over-reach any that is shallow or half-witted, nor to deal hardly with those that fall under our power. A profession or trade is not chiefly to enrich the artist, but the dealer with him is to have the benefit of his skill, and security by his honesty ; *cuiuslibet credendum in arte sua* ; we are to credit an artist in the skill he professeth. 7. There are to be no rash constructions of words and actions ; you are not to interpret that in a bad sense, which is capable of a good one. If you do otherwise, you may make that an injury which was intended for a courtesy. The prophet *Isaiah* represents it as horrid and unnatural, to make a man an offender for a word, *Isa. xxix. 21*. They that are captious, severe in their censures ; they spoil converse ; for in such company no man can speak freely, but always in fear ; and before he can say any thing, he must consider what interpretation the utmost possibility of his words may bear, and what may be made of them, before he can speak. For we are to know, that in words there is a trust as well as in lending or borrowing of money. Also it may be supposed, that what is pleasantly or suddenly spoken hath no teeth : also what is spoken passionately, hath less in it, than men are apt to take, or than seemed to be said ; because men that speak hastily when they are

are in passion, they are often sorry for what they have said ; after they have spoken, they would revoke it, mend it as much as they can, by explaining themselves : will not stand to it, neither will they repeat their words ; which is an argument that the meaning was not so bad, as the words seemed to express. 8. Not to do that in company, in our converse, which may give any of the company cause of offence, or wherein others are unsatisfied either as to the lawfulness, decency, or expediency of it, for mode, manner or matter. If otherwise, converse will be with offence, company will be grievous and burdensome. We should not bring any thing into debate, without common consent. No man patiently bears to have that which he believes to be true, talk'd out of countenance. If the company submit it to debate, it is another case. In converse, it is not what one may suppose, but what the rest will accept. For if it comes to this case, that one do, and others do not comply ; great inconvenience may follow ; which may be better prevented than remedied. It is an injury to put a man upon that, wherein the reason of his mind is unsatisfied ; or which, if he consents not to do it, he is exposed to contempt, and made ridiculous. For we do value and esteem our credit and repute. Wherefore every one is so to moderate himself in the use of his liberty, that another may be as free as he is ; else conversation is to mens loss, and the best men will withdraw. 9. Let every one be heard. This is necessary. There must be *vices dicendi & respondendi* ; we must suffer every man to speak in his turn, and give opportunity for answer and reply. For if  
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you do not so, you make him no body, and none of the company while he is in it. Whosoever I think fit to admit into my company, I should esteem him worthy to be heard. Also it often falls out, that he from whom we expect least, speaks the greatest sense. 10. Let no man's sense be rejected with scorn ; but, if need be, opposed with reason, and without any ill reflection on the person. For whether right or wrong, he that hath spoken hath done the company the greatest courtesy he can, to tell his opinion ; especially if he declares his grounds ; either offering conclusive reasons, and so put an end to the debates ; or shews cause of demur, upon which the resolution will be better grounded. For the rule of wisdom is, men should not judge too hastily ; sudden determinations, when there is no interruption in the least to consider, are not so connatural and solid, as those that are the issue of consideration, and thought. If these measures be observed, converse will be without offence and profitable. 11. Meet friends, and part friends. If we do not *meet* as friends, there can be no expectation of good ; unless in this case, that the meeting be in order to reconciliation ; and if so, then there ought to be composure of mind, and peremptory resolution of mutual forbearance and declining all matter of offence and provocation. Therefore in this case, look rather forward than backward ; what may be for time to come, than what hath been in falling out. Then in the next place I advise, as we *meet* friends, so also that we *part* friends. To this purpose we must use one another handsomely, while we are together ; treat each other with respect.

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There is a great reverence due to human nature ; which if not given, we disparage ourselves. And in converse there is a communion, *per quam omnes transeunt in unitatem quandam*, whereby all pass into a kind of union, communion, and mutual participation of converse.

If these rules and measures be observed, converse will be without offence, and profitable. Whosoever fails in these common duties of fair carriage and behaviour and general good-will whereto all are indifferently bound, and it costs little to do it, since a good word is as soon and as easily spoken as a bad one ; there is very little hope that he will do right in that which is more costly. He that will not confine himself to fair converse, there is little hope that such a one will perform the more costly duties of doing all good offices of kindness, where there is no particular law ; and of charitably relieving the necessitous, to whom he has no relation of affinity.



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## DISCOURSE XCVI.

### The great instances of wickedness.

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PSALM v. 4, 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**S**INCE it is our only security to be in reconciliation with God, and our happiness in eternity to live in attendance upon him and enjoyment of him ; we are above all things concerned to know those things that make a difference between God and us, alienate God from us, and estrange us from him ; that we may avoid them. To this purpose, this scripture doth fully declare, *thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness.*

I have made enquiry what we are to understand by *wickedness and works of iniquity*, and I have reduced them to these four heads.

1. Things contrary to the respect we owe to God himself.
2. Things contrary to general love and goodwill.
3. Things contrary to justice, fairness and righteousness.
4. Things contrary to sobriety, chastity, and temperance.

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I have done with the *three* first, and proceed now to the *fourth*. And since it comes of course that this is my argument \* this day, I cannot but take notice how seasonable also it is in respect of the late time of feasting ; that if there hath been any excess, I shall now call you to repentance ; just as holy *Job* did, *Job* i. 5. cautious and wary *Job*, suspecting they might give God an offence, he doth every day sacrifice, and make an atonement : the things that I am to speak to, are represented to us, *Rom.* xiii. 13. *Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness ; we are required to do things that are fit and comely, worthy human nature. I must not instance in things, which pure minds, modest ears, cannot bear ; I mean those things quæ dum dicuntur, discuntur ; If they be but named, they are taught ; things of which it is a shame to speak, Eph.* v. 12. About these I shall be silent ; things not named amongst heathens, *1 Cor.* v. 1. Things that are not owned in the wilderness of the world. And indeed, where men give way to their own lusts and inordinate appetites, they are apt to run into all *excesses of riot, 1 Pet.* iv. 4. Such as these the apostle challengeth, *Rom.* i. 18, 24. Persons who *hold the truth in unrighteousness ; given up to uncleanness, to vile affections, to reprobacy of mind, verse 28.*

But I shall insist upon miscarriages that are more ordinary and common, and not of such a deep complexion. We are to moderate ourselves in the use of all the conveniencies of this state ; that is, we

\* Preached a little after Christmas.

ought to observe the measure of nature, and of reason ; so, to exercise sobriety, chastity, temperance. For the end is to regulate the mean. We are to eat, drink, sleep, that we may live ; not live to eat, drink, and sleep. For it is monstrous to transpose the mean and end. They who do so, they sin against the reason of their own mind, and offer violence to their own nature. For nature, before it be abused, is satisfied with reasonable things. But those who do exceed, they sin against the reason of their minds, and offer violence to their nature ; they are so far short from being christians, that they have not reserved to themselves the being of a man. For how is any man a rational agent, who by his sensuality hath confounded the reason of his own mind, which is the proper excellency of human nature. This is the privation of his proper excellency, the reason of his mind, the form that doth constitute in specie. *Species sequitur ultimam formam.* The kinds of things are assigned by the last, perfectest, and highest form. So in nature. This is certainly as great a change, as when a living man by death becomes a carcass. For man is not a man by his body, but by his mind. For if a man be out of the use of reason by his own disorder, he may be alive, but he is alive to his own shame. Sins of this kind, abuse both the body and the mind ; they destroy the body's health, strength, and good constitution, whereby the body is made a fit habitation for the soul ; and they besot, dull and stupify the mind : *fleshly lusts do war against the soul,* 1 Pet. ii. 11. It is a miserable thing to think, that as some men by the exercise of reason and the practice

tice of virtue, do advance themselves, and improve their naturals, and render themselves ten times more than other men are, nor they themselves were born to, so there are others, that by misgovernment of themselves, by excess and intemperance, spoil the parts of their minds : *anima sicca est anima prudens* : wisdom is conjoined with temperance.

Now for a man, as the apostle phrases it, to *make provision for the flesh to satisfy its lusts*, Rom. xiii. 14. to make it his business, the employment of mind and understanding, to cater for the body, to satisfy the desires of the flesh ; for one that is invested with intellectual nature, to take care how to fare sumptuously every day, *Luke xvi. 14.* or how to have ground to bring forth plentifully, or to provide capacious barns, *Luke xii. 20.* Did God light his candle in man, for such mean and ordinary purposes as these are ? the fowls of the air, fish of the sea, beasts of the field, they have no such solicitous cares as these men have ; yet they are accommodated, nature's necessities are supplied, and they live as well as we. But what saith the parable ? *Thou fool ! this night thy soul shall be required.* It fastens the stile of fool upon him ; folly has no discerning of things ; fools do not distinguish the difference of things. For what a difference is there between time and eternity, between bodily conveniencies and the accomplishments of the mind, the drudgery of the world, and attendance upon God !

The sensualist becomes brutish ; by sottishness and carnality, we render ourselves utterly incapable of and unfit for heavenly contemplation, for converse with God, which is our proper employment.



*lectus est propter Deum* : mind and understanding are for God. There is not a greater propriety of faculty and object, between our seeing faculty and light, between our hearing faculty and sounds; not a greater suitableness and proportion; not a greater propriety, than between our minds and God. It had been better that we had been less, if we had not liberty of access and approach to God. For mind and understanding hath no satisfaction in any other employment, but in attendance upon God. God made our souls for himself, and they are unsatisfied if alienated from him. To spirituality and heavenly-mindedness we may not indispose ourselves, by any use of our faculties. This is an inscription God hath written upon our high and noble faculties; they are not to be indisposed by any worldly drudgery or concerns of the body, or to be diverted from that which is their proper quality, to receive from God and make returns upon him; these are the appropriate and reserved acts of mind and understanding. For it is a candle lighted by God and set up by him to direct man to God. Therefore we cannot alienate our rational faculties from God, without the guilt of sacrilege and robbing of God. For so says the prophet, he who fails in his service and attendance, *robs God*, Mal. iii. 8. He understands himself very little, forgets that in his make he bears the image of God; who gives up himself to any sin, who gratifies any of his appetites to the indisposing of his higher faculties for the vital acts of reason and of virtue. I say, vital acts; because these are the acts of man as he is a man; for his other acts are belonging to him in common

common with beasts; but man is *in specie per animam*, man is in kind by his soul. For mind is the man, *animus cujusque est quisque*. The excellency of the body is, that it is the soul's instrument; *mens sana in corpore sano*, a mind in its perfection, in a body well composed and fitted for the soul.

I shall not take upon me to determine the measure of eating and drinking, which make the sins of intemperance where they exceed. It is a business of great accuracy, to assign the exact bounds of good and evil, of lawful and unlawful in any sorts of things. It is as accurate a business, as it is for a man to assign which is the last moment of day, and the first moment of the night. For there is twilight, which is fully neither one nor the other, but partaker of both: so in things that are materially lawful, and are good and ill by their exceeding, it is as great skill to determine what is good and evil. Therefore we say we are most in danger in things that are lawful in their nature and matter, and yet become evil if out of season.

The casuists talk of eating and drinking.

1. *Ad necessitatem naturæ*, to supply nature's necessity, to abate hunger and thirst, to maintain and uphold the fabrick of the body. This is unavoidable, this is of necessity, this we must do; for otherwise we kill ourselves, and violate the sixth commandment.

2. *Ad hilaritatem mentis*, for chearfulness, for reviving. This, casuists say, is warrantable upon occasions; but not so ordinary in this as in our daily food.

3. *Ad stuporem mentis, est turpe & indecorum*, to stupify our minds, abuse our faculties, here is turpitude and undecency. For we are to use measure and season in things materially lawful. In the case before us, temperance is not only a lovely virtue, but also salutary and sovereign: whence we say, *cibo modicus, sibi medicus*; men shall seldom need a physician, if they do but govern themselves well in respect of eating and drinking. Now in this case, the physician prescribes to the body, the divine to the soul; the physician, he considers only the bodily estate, for the health of the body; but the divine chiefly looks at the security of the mind. The physician saith, *not one meal upon another, till nature hath done with the former*; and the English proverb, *the second meal makes the glutton*: but the divine saith, *things of the body are to be ordered so, as that there be no annoyance to the mind, or as little as may be*. For I remember what *Erasmus* says; *post cibum omnes minores sumus*; after eating and drinking we are for a while but half ourselves. This we say of men that use temperance: a man is not so apt for contemplation, or business, or reason, immediately after he hath dined; he must *vacare*, and give his soul time to act as a principle of life; and must abate the use of it, as it is a principle of intelligence: this is the necessity of our nature.

I find *St. Austin*, that great father, was mighty solicitous in this point of eating and drinking. I will satisfy myself in this point of curiosity, with this rule; *nec contra sensum naturæ, nec ordinem rationis*; let nothing be done against the sense of nature, nor against the order of reason. And before abuse of ourselves  
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by accustomed excess, nature's sense is a good guide, till we have abused ourselves by ill custom, use and practice. Miscarriage in this kind, is for the most part occasioned by the humour of compliance; when men exceed, to comply one with another; go beyond what is their choice, to what is their use; abuse themselves, to keep fair and comply. We need not for eating and drinking, any other foreign inducement; for nature craves enough *usque ad satietatem*, to abate hunger and thirst.

An offence in this kind, is *sibi ipsi pœna*, a punishment to itself. For intemperance ends in the sottishness of the mind, and bodily diseases. But for measure and season, every sober person gives himself law; and it must be every body must be left to himself; because there will be a variation. No body can assign either the measure or quantity; because there will be a variation upon account of the age of the person, and the season of the year, from the different climate wherein men are, from the very bodies of men, their weakness and strength, mens labour and employment; and this latitude, all within the compass of sobriety and temperance. So that for particular circumstances, I must leave it to men themselves, as the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 15. *I speak as unto wise men*; and as the apostle in another case, 1 Cor. xi. 13. *Judge in yourselves, is it comely?* Let us therefore carefully observe this general rule; observe decency, comeliness, what becomes so excellent a creature, which may not disparage human nature, not unqualify or disable for the highest acts of intelligence, for application to God. A man would be



unwilling to die, when he is unqualified, by the abuse of his reason, to do an act of intelligence. For all acts of grace and virtue, depend upon our letting all things be done with decency and comeliness; considering this always, that tho' our several faculties under God be our own, yet we have not power to use any of them so as to indispose them to the ends and purposes, uses and employments, they were made and intended for in the moment of God's creation. We may no more do this, than we may destroy our own lives; and we do destroy them if we abuse them. For what are powers and faculties, but in order to use, in order to their acts and objects? *Frustra est potentia quæ non reducitur in actum*; a power in nature is useless and to no purpose, except it be called forth to act. Therefore sobriety, chastity, temperance, have their foundation in the nature of man: for sobriety and temperance are conservative of those faculties in us, which are to be employed in exercise of reason, practice of virtue, and in acts of observance of God.

Mind and understanding in man, hath God's supercription upon it; and it is money belonging to God. And we must give to God, that which is God's. It must not be so abused, as to be unqualified for that which is its peculiar appropriate; as, to receive from God, to be sensible of him, make acknowledgments to him and returns upon him. Let not a man allow himself so, as to be at any time disabled to these eminent acts of piety and devotion. We must not give ourselves up, *brutum pascere*, to feed the beast; to pamper the body and neglect the soul.

foul. As the apostle hath it; *living in pleasures, wantonness, nourished up for the day of slaughter.* What a shameful sight is it, to see a man disguis'd out of the use of reason, and disabled to govern himself, by his own fault? there is no such thing in the inferior creation: for the creatures below us, except they be deceived, (for they are not able, as we are, to distinguish) they so use themselves as that they are always found themselves; and you never find them worse than themselves. A person disguised by excess, is a horrid prodigious monster. We are wont to call drunkenness a beastly sin; but we bely the beasts, when we do so; for there is no such thing with them.

Every sin hath its own punishment sooner or later. Sometimes *malum passionis*, the evil of suffering, follows after *malum actionis*, the evil of action, at some distance: but always great inconvenience and mischief accompanies this sin which is a home-evil. It was a good saying of St. *Austin*; *fecisti Domine, & sic est, ut omnis inordinatus appetitus sit sibi ipsi pœna*; O God, thou wouldest so have it, and thou hast so appointed it, that every inordinate appetite, the misgovernment of ourselves, is a punishment to itself. But sudden evils do attend this sin; dethroning of reason as to the interior man; and as to the exterior, what is more visible? *Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. Who hath woe? who sorrow? who contention? who babbling? who wounds? who redness of eyes? They who continue long at the wine.* Whereupon he giveth good advice in verse 31. *Look not upon wine when it is red, &c.* The provocations of appetites, are *instrumenta malorum*

*rum, verse 32. at last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. verse 17. Be in the fear of the Lord all the day. verse 20. Be not among wine-bibbers, and riotous eaters of flesh. verse 21. The drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty. Isa. v. 22. Woe to them that are mighty to drink wine.*

To conclude. This I find, that not only the religion of God's creation, but also the gospel-religion doth require sobriety. That grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth us to live godly, righteously and soberly. Ephes. v. 18. *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.* Let us therefore take warning by instances in scripture, to avoid others miscarriages, and so to prevent the mischief they brought upon themselves by running into excess. 1 Cor. x. 6. *Not lust as they lusted, and were overthrown in the wilderness.* Psal. lxxviii. 30. *while the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of the Lord fell upon them, &c.* Exod. xxxii. 6. *They sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.* And what followed upon it? three thousand men fell that day. Job xxi. 12. *They take to themselves the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ; spend their days in jollity and mirth, and in a moment they go down to the grave.* On the contrary, for a certain preservative against excess and immoderation, I propose, and with that conclude; Psal. cxix. 148. *My eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word, to think of thee.* Let us with David, be in the fear of God; let our minds be fixed upon him; reserve mind and understanding for observance of God, and attendance upon him.

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## DISCOURSE XCVII.

### The great instances of wickedness.

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PSALM v. 4, 5.

*Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c.*

**T**Hese words give us to understand the terms that are between God and his creatures. Some are very bold to make complaint of God, as if he used his creatures hardly, or as if his goodness were not so great as some would wish, or as scripture did declare. It is not the creature that God doth hate ; he takes no offence at them, but only as they are wicked workers of iniquity ; *thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, &c. Psal. xlv. 7.* God loveth righteousness, but he hateth wickedness ; God hath no offence, nor displeasure against us, as we are his creatures ; for *Psal. cxlv. 9. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Do we believe what we ourselves do acknowledge of God in our publick worship ? We tell God that *he hateth nothing that he hath made*, but inviteth all to repent, and rejoiceth when sinners do return. It is an admirable place, *Wisd. xi. 21. Thou lovest all things that are, and dost hate nothing that thou hast made ; for if thou hadst hated it, why wouldst thou have made it ?* So that we say, no man's application to God in any condition whatsoever, no man's faith in God meets with a-  
ny



ny discouragement from any thing in respect of God. The *Roman* orator *Cicero* hath a saying to this purpose, *A superis nulli impendit metus mortalibus* ; from the supreme power above, there is no fear, no danger, no occasion of discouragement to us mortals here below ; we are not at all in danger in respect of God's power, though it be irresistible ; but we have encouragement from it rather, because it is in conjunction with infinite goodness, and so may make acts of goodness more effectual. I will add but two places of scripture, because I observe this only by way of intimation. *Acts* x. 35. *God is no respecter of persons*, receives no prejudice, is not disaffected towards any of his creatures ; but in every nation, whosoever he is that fears God and works righteousness, is accepted of him. And if we consider the circumstances of the text, the scripture is more remarkable ; for *Peter* was forced into this sense and acknowledgment by a miracle, repeated again and again ; for this is contrary to the *Jewish* doctrine and opinion. The other place is, *Rom.* ii. 6. *God will render to every man according to his deeds ; glory, honour, and peace, to every one that worketh righteousness ; but to them who obey not the truth, tribulation and anguish.* Let us preserve ourselves from the abomination of desolation, and a just provocation of him : and we may have great confidence in our maker. This I account to be of natural impression. *Plato* hath a brave discourse to this purpose ; that that which is divine, cannot be hurtful : nothing of devilish there : but grace, mercy and compassion.

I account him a traducer of God, who represents him as having an ill design upon his creatures, or who represents him thus, that upon offence received from his creatures, he is implacable and irreconcilable ; or who thinks that God doth not give place to repentance. For, Two things I declare concerning repentance ; 1. That it doth alter the very temper of the sinner. 2. That it is a motive with God, and doth affect him : it doth procure atonement in respect of God. Repentance alters the state and temper of the person, wheresoever it is ; so that we may say, a penitent upon a moral account is not the same that he was when he did sin. Now this I argue ; if God took so great offence at those who were sent to search and view the land of *Canaan*, who brought an ill report of temporal *Canaan*, *Num. xvi. 16.* what displeasure may we in reason imagine that God will take at those that do speak hard things of himself ? He took so much offence at the spies, that he resolved none of them should ever enter into the promised land ; and can we suppose that they that misrepresent God, and bring so ill a report of him, that God is not highly displeased with them ? It is remarkable in that short epistle of *Jude*, it is said that *he will come to judge, and to convince sinners of all the hard*, without any substantive joined with it ; so that we may put in *thoughts, words or deeds*. To discharge men of all these hard words, thoughts and imaginations, which they have concerning God, or his dealings with his creatures, I doubt not but it will manifestly appear at long run, that whosoever perisheth, his destruction is of himself ; to wit, either his own gross carelessness,

or

or his wilfulness, or his voluntary allowance of himself, to gratify his lusts or his humours in things which will do him mischief. This no doubt will appear, whensoever God calls to account. He will certainly justify himself in the sense of angels and men; and every one that perisheth will be self-condemned: it will lie upon their wilfulness, or voluntary allowance that did them mischief. What better measure, pray, can we expect from God, or can our own hearts wish, than that allowance that God of his own good-will affords? *Psal. ciii. 13. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord hath compassion on them that fear him.* *Mal. iii. 17. As a father spares a son that serves him, so will the Lord spare those that fear him, and think upon his name.* And we know and have experience how far this extends, the affection of parents to children, to render to them the best construction; and how patient if things be amiss, and how willing to hear intention and purpose of amendment. God declares to this purpose concerning himself. He makes it visible and apparent, if his own ways to us be not equal. But it hath been the fashion of old for sinners, to be mal-content and to complain of God. *Ezek xviii.* the whole chapter is spent in God's justifying of himself against the murmurings and complainings of men. It was the great miscarriage while the *Israelites* were under the conduct of God, and while he did miraculously provide for them, upon all occasions, to murmur against him: and here they had got a proverb that cast a reproach upon God: *The father hath eaten four grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge.* But how amply and abundantly, and in several particulars,

Iars, doth God answer and disprove this proverbial saying. We have no other reason to complain of God, than a child hath to complain of his careful parent, that doth interpose and hinder him from doing himself harm.

Now to finish what I have been so long upon, wickedness and works of iniquity : we are highly concerned, if we value God's favour and interest in him, to know what these are, that we may avoid them. I have treated of acts of impiety and profaneness ; these terminate immediately upon God himself : acts of unrighteousness, falshood, treachery, cruelty ; these towards one another, these terminate upon our fellow-creatures : acts of dissoluteness and intemperate living ; these terminate in ourselves.

I have treated of sobriety, chastity and temperance, due moderation in ourselves, self-government in respect of things of the body. There is a choicer part, man's mind, his soul ; and the misgovernment of that, is more intensely evil than the other. For sins, the more spiritual they are, the more vile. The sins of the mind, though they have less of infamy, because not so discernible to by-standers ; yet they have no less of malignity. Therefore I must give you an account of those things that belong to the misgovernment of the mind. 1. The mind's sentiments. 2. The motions of the will. 3. The affections, or the passions. And in these, men may greatly offend and become obnoxious to God. Sobriety is greatly concerned in the government of these ; irreligion and wickedness, in the neglect.



1. For the sentiments of the mind. The mind's sense may have malignity in it, as well as words and actions. *Rom. viii. 7. The carnal mind is enmity against God*; the internal sense and disposition, the very sentiment of men that are carnally-minded, men that live in an evil spirit. Men shew their spirits by their actions. A naughty temper appears in outward motions. Evil is first conceived in the mind; *out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, &c. Mat. xv. 19.* An action that is to the harm of another, it is past by as but a mischance, if it be not designed and intended; for according to the mind's intention, so are things estimated and accounted; what is meant, rather than what is done. It is an apology and excuse, I did not intend it, it was against my mind and will. Wherefore we do observe, that the mind of a good man is his best part, and the mind of a bad man is his worst part: for a good man hath a mind to do more good than he can compass; and a bad man, he cannot execute so much evil as he hath a mind to. Wherefore God saith, *give me thy heart*; and not only *cleanse your hands*, but *purify your hearts, ye sinners.* Now here I must challenge these internal distempers, as things of great malignity, as things that are to be accounted wickedness in the highest degree; to wit, haughtiness of mind, insolence, arrogance; these shew the misgovernment of the inward man. Also malcontent, peevishness, frowardness, spitefulness; so likewise presumption, over-weening, self-conceit, comparing ourselves with others, in our secret thoughts to commend or prefer ourselves; these shew an internal malignity or naughtiness of mind, that men are poisoned

poisoned even in their very temper. Whatsoever is contrary to humility becoming a creature, or the modesty befitting a sinner, or the sense *quam sit nobis curata supellax*; what is not suitable to the sense that we all ought to have how poor, naked, blind, and miserable we are. For this is our case, and the case of the best of us; the most that any of us know, is the least of what is to be known; and the best that any of us can do, is liable to mistake, or may be charged with some imperfection. Whereof then are we to boast? How can we value ourselves above others? It is a contradiction in adjecto; as much as to say, a cold fire, a dark sun; to say a creature that is insolent, or a sinner that is self-conceited and arrogant; a proud and bold sinner, nothing is of greater ugliness and deformity. This is that which is the first; the sentiments of mens minds. Look inwardly, examine yourselves, try your temper, see what is in you; these are the things that are ungovernable, and here reformation ought to begin.

2. The motions of the will; that is the next, wherein we ought to use sobriety and temperance. And we have this word also in the apostle, *Eph. ii. 3. the wills of the flesh*, which is rendered *lusts*, these are, always exorbitant; whensoever the will moves without direction of the reason of the mind, that is exorbitant; whensoever a man's will moves and goes before the reason of his mind; much more, if a man hath a will against the reason of his mind. Some there are, that must have their wills, right or wrong: *give me children, or else I die. Stet pro ratione voluntas*: this is all the reason I give; my mind, my will, let

let that be a reason ; but better give none at all ; for that is worse than none. We do know the sovereign authority of reason, and thereto we owe subjection ; but it is a grievous thing, to be subject to another's will, or humour ; it is certainly the highest usurpation upon mankind, *agere pro arbitrio & non pro ratione rei* ; the greatest slavery in nature, to be subject to will and humour. And I must observe, that will undirected by reason, in this case the order of nature is wholly inverted, when the judgment of mind goes not before, and the motions of the will follow after. We know where to have men, when guided by reason ; for as to the reason of things, another man may judge as well as he : but from will, when no reason is given, no body knows what he may be sure of, or what he may expect. If so be men set up either will or humour, none can know what will be done : for a creature that is finite and fallible, to set up will for a light, is as wild-fire.

3. The affections and passions ; these are to be still and quiet, till after judgment and choice. For their place is only in pursuance ; no place in determination. By judgment we find out our way, and by our passions we are expedite in it ; *movemus per intellectum, currimus per affectus* ; we move by the guidance and direction of judgment and understanding ; and when we are in motion, our affections give expedition. Affections are not for direction of what is to be done, but they are only for expedition and quickning. The reason of the mind is all in all determination ; not what we *would* do, nor what we *have a mind* to do, but what is *just and fit*, what is

best

*best* in the competition. This is not discernable by mens passions, and affections; this is only discernable in the use of reason and understanding. Affections are blind things of themselves, and they must only follow. There are two things requisite in this case, if a man will approve himself in respect of his passions and affections. 1. That the passion and the object do fit. 2. That the proportion be observed between the act and the object. 1. For the first, we are not to love what is hateful, nor hate what is lovely. Wherefore the apostle saith, *love not the world, i. e. the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life.* Here the passion and object do not fit. 2. The proportion is to be observed; to wit, the degrees of the act, to the quality of the object. If an inferior good; we must not be too intent upon it, we must not extend our affections to many such things, we must not continue too long; *nec nimis intensè, nec nimis extensè, nec nimis protensè.* Our highest faculties are too large to be satisfied or employed about any object inferior to God himself; our highest faculties, those whereby we are constituted in the kind of human nature, those in respect of which we bear the image of God, are too sublime, too noble, too high, too large, either to be satiated, or fully employed, in any object less than God himself.

These things have I suggested to you, for the government of the inward man. When I gave you an account of sobriety and moderation, then I was wholly taken up about what was outward and visible; moderate use of eating, drinking, and sleeping. But now I have gone close here, touching the very in-



ward man, the sense of a man's soul ; what is his inward sentiments, what sense he hath of God, of things of the world, of virtue and of vice ; what he makes his choice and delight, what he doth pursue with his affections, wherein he is passionate in his desires. I add upon the whole. If we consider the principles whereof we do consist, we may discover that all these duties lie upon us. For if we know ourselves, and what is becoming reasonable nature ; we shall have a rule to guide us in respect of all moral good and evil. For such a nature as the nature of man is, intellectual nature, it gives law to itself, and carries a law with it, and is made with the law, and the law is in its own bowels, and is never extirpated while it continues in being : the law of reason is inherent to human nature.

The effects of wisdom and virtue, which do belong to intellectual nature, they give security to our minds, and settle them in a right state ; whereas vice and works of iniquity, which are the diseases of such a nature, they do alter and spoil our temper and constitution. Wisdom and virtue are suitable and connatural, and they are conservative and productive of all acts that are truly the acts of a man, as a man ought to be. And on the other side, sin is the disease and distemper of such a nature, as men consist of ; it alters, poisons, and destroys the right temper and constitution thereof ; it weakens and infebles it.

It is base and unworthy, to live below the dignity of our nature ; to the dishonour of a creature that bears the image of God. What a shame is it for us to live in contradiction to the end of our being, to  
what

what our nature appointed us ? They degenerate into carnality, who use their minds and reasons to such low and base ends and purposes, as better become the natures below us. These men neither know nor consider themselves, they have no reverence for themselves ; who employ themselves as if they were invested with the nature of creatures below them. Do acts worthy of reason and understanding, and refer yourselves to God as judge.

Can we flatter ourselves so far, or persuade ourselves, but that God will sooner or later require an account of the use of these divine faculties that God hath given us, mind and understanding ; which certainly are for better purpose, than for the slavery of sin, and for the drudgery of the world ? If we were made for this purpose, it had been better we had been less. We ought not then to have born the image of God at all. For is it not quite otherwise in the heavenly state ? And ought not the higher state to give law and rule to this inferior state ? Ought not things here below to be subject to the things above ? And ought not this lower world to resemble and imitate the higher world ? The rule should be taken from above ; the law of heaven should be the law of the world ; and the employment of mind and understanding in eternity, should be the employment that we should use and addict ourselves mainly to here.

But I will advance and give you an argument that will command. Doth God himself lay or impose upon us any other law, than what he himself doth observe ? And doth he require of us to do, what he

himself doth not choose to do ? For a being that is infinitely perfect, doth act agreeably to the highest wisdom and greatest goodness ; for his throne is established in righteousness. *Is there unrighteousness with God ? God forbid.* Thus it becomes us who are endued with reason and understanding, to act conformably to the original of our being, suitable to the principles of the natures whereof we do consist ; both as to the choice of things, and as to the principles of our natures ; *ad dei exemplar*, according to God's example. This cannot be looked upon by any man that is sober and considerate, as a hard law imposed upon us by arbitrary will or power ; but a law that of itself commands, and by its nature and quality recommends it self to us. It is not imposed by will and arbitrary power, to do as God himself doth ; *be ye holy, as I am holy ; be ye followers of God.*

Sense of a deity is inherent in intellectual nature. There is no instinct stronger in any nature, than the sense of a deity is in rational nature ; and neglect of God, is an act as of the greatest deformity, so of greatest force and violence in the world. It is worse than for a man to offer violence to his body by sword or knife, to alienate his mind and understanding from God. For there is a peculiarity between the mind and understanding, and God. It is alienation and sacrilege, to live without God in the world.

Now if we find it otherwise, the consequence must be very bad. For there cannot but be great unquietness and dissatisfaction in ourselves. There is great pain, if joint do not answer to joint, if there be a dislocation : as much dissatisfaction certainly and un-

unquietness, if the highest faculty, which is most perceptive, be not tied up to its peculiar and proper object ; if the reason of our minds go one way, and our wills another way ; when we have judgment and conscience of what is right, but impetuosity of passion and ungoverned affection beat us off ; when pleasurable and profitable, are preferred before just and honest : these are things of deformity and greatest violence ; and where there is violence antecedent, there mischief follows it at the heels.

Tho' in cases and circumstances which may happen, there may be some doubtfulness and cause of irresolution ; as it is in case of those which we call *particulariora, contractiora jura*, the lesser rights ; yet the *majora jura, pietatis, justitiæ, sobrietatis*, the greater rights of piety to God, reverence, regard, duty, observance of him ; fairness, justice, equal-dealing with men ; sobriety, chastity, temperance ; the government of the body, so as to be subservient to the temper of the mind ; and the mind living in love, dwelling in peace, well-composed, fitted for mental and spiritual acts ; these are such bright lights, as the eye of reason cannot but see them. No man can make an excuse for his being immoral, in any kind whatsoever. For these things are of universal acknowledgment, in all times, in all places ; there is nothing of religion and conscience, where these things do not take place. The principles of reason, and the further light of revelation, agree in these things, *Titus ii. 12. For the grace of God that brings salvation, teaches us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present*



*world* ; now he hath put out both his eyes, that sees not these things, that doth not discern his obligation to them ; he hath put out the eye of natural light, and that eye whereby he sees things of divine revelation.

I have now given you an account of these things which are so mischievous in man, which are conjoined with his everlasting fate and destiny ; things of high offence and displeasure to God. And if you value your safety to eternity, if you value your approving yourselves to God, if you would approve yourselves to be capable of judgment of truth, and right and wrong ; take these things into consideration.

*The end of the fourth Volume.*

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## The P R A Y E R,

*Some parts of which were ordinarily used by Dr.  
WHICHCOTE before sermon.*

**A**Lmighty God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of the spirits of all flesh, we profess all dependence upon thee, we live in all expectation from thee. Awaken (we intreat thee) all the powers and faculties of our souls to acts of lively sense and apprehension of thee. Call us to due diligence and careful attendance upon thee, that we may have our God highly in regard; that we may have great reverence of Deity in our minds; that we may be in the fear and apprehensions of thee while we are before thee.

Put us (we humbly pray thee) upon all those acts towards thee that ever thou madst us capable of, in the moment of thy creation of us; that we may duly acknowledge thee, who art the original of our beings; that we may greatly reverence thee, who art the father of our spirits; that we may obey thee fully, who art our governor; that we may serve thee freely, who art our Lord and owner; that we may be thankful unto thee, who art our great benefactor; that we may admire and adore thee, who art a being of all perfection; that we may love and delight in thee, who art the first and chiefest good; that we may place all affiance, trust, and confidence in thee, because of thy gracious promises; that we may come unto thee, in answer to thy invitation and call; that we may believe thee, who art most certain and infallible; that we may commit the great trust of our souls unto thee, because of thy known faithfulness to us; that we may rest in thee, the center of immortal

tal spirits ; and ultimately refer to thee, who art the end of all things ; and in the use of our liberty, that we may present thy majesty with a free-will offering and bring unto thee the consent of our minds ; that so we may become altogether thine ; that as we are thine by thy creation of us, by thy maintenance, and preservation, by thy constant providence over us, by thy gracious assuming of us into a relation to thyself by thy Son, making us the adoption of thy grace ; so we may be also thine, by our voluntary dedicating and devoting ourselves to thy fear and service.

2. To this purpose destroy out of us, whatever we have acquired unnatural to the principles of thy creation of us, by abuse of ourselves, by neglect of thy grace, by compliance with the corrupt guise of this sinful, degenerate, and apostate world. O naturalize us to heaven, reconcile us to all the things of that high estate : that so we may not drudge in the world, nor act in a slavish spirit in ways of religion ; but that we may serve thee with ingenuity of mind, with freedom of spirit, as those that are set at liberty, and delivered from the bondage and slavery of iniquity, having the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, making us free from the law of sin and death.

3. Blessed God, we have cause thankfully to acknowledge the divine goodness, for thou hast loved our souls from the pit of destruction : thou hast laid help for us upon one that is mighty, and every ways able to save ; and hast declared thy salvation (God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing trespasses ;) thou hast raised up for us a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to us, and forgiveness of sins. Now it is the language of our souls in the ears of our God ; make us partakers of that salvation which thou hast appointed, and which our Saviour has wrought, and our souls shall bless thee to eternity.

4. To

4. To this purpose bring us within the terms of the covenant of grace (repentance from dead works, resolved obedience in all things to God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ) and suffer us not herein to fail or to fall short. Give us heartily and sincerely to revoke and undo whatsoever we have done amiss in life ; to condemn ourselves for doing those things, to deprecate thy just offence, and displeasure ; to cry thee mercy ; to ask thee pardon ; and for all time to come, to leave off to sin, and to return to our duty.

5. And let us herein be gainers by our former losses and miscarriages, to make us more sensible of our weakness and inability ; and of our necessary dependence upon thee our God : to be more thankful unto thee for thy gracious interposure, in preventing of us from running into those evils, that we have not committed ; to be modest and humble in the sense of our former miscarriages ; to be cautious and wary, that in time to come we do not transgress ; and to make us more charitable and compassionate to our brethren, that in many things may have failed as well as we.

6. Give us carefully to hold the head of the church, and to make all due acknowledgments to the Saviour of the body mystical ; help us to conceive of him, for the height and excellency of his person ; for the worthiness and fulness of his undertaking, and performance on our behalf ; according as we ought. Let us have that dependence upon him, that expectation by him, that thou hast warranted us to have ; and make that use of him, that thou hast set him up for ; both that our faith and hope may finally rest in God ; as also, that we may be planted into the likeness of his death, by mortification, self-denial, self-surrender ; and may bear the image of his resurrection, by spirituality and heavenly-mindedness ; that so he may become a compleat Saviour to us



us, we having redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins ; and the renovation of our natures, by the operation of his good spirit.

7. Bring us, we humbly pray thee, to the truth of a creature-state, humility, and modesty : cloath our minds with that humility that befits creatures ; with that modesty that becomes sinners. Suffer us not to be vainly fraught nor possessed ; to be giddily minded, or intoxicated with fond conceits. O let us not live in a lie, flatter ourselves, deceiving our own souls, promising that of ourselves, or of any other creature, that will not prove true.

Help us all along in life to subordinate all the affairs and transactions of time to serve the interest of our souls in the state that is before us. Help us to shake off this vain world, and to breathe after eternity, immortality, and glory ; being in perfect reconciliation with the law of everlasting righteousness, goodness, and truth ; which are the laws of heaven : so shall we comply with thy nature, mind, and will, and fully answer the relation we stand in to thee. Relieve and ease our consciences, by the blood of sprinkling, according to our several conditions of body and mind ; supply us with suitable grace and strength.

8. We are, O Lord, thy care and charge ; thou undertakest for us ; we confess and acknowledge that we are in nothing self-sufficient : not wise enough for our own direction ; not able enough for our own defence ; nor yet good enough for our own satisfaction. We came into being at thy call ; and we continue in being at thy maintenance and allowance ; and we shall go out of these beings which now we have, at thine appointment ; and it will not be in our power to withhold our souls from thee one moment, tho' the state and welfare of them to all eternity did depend thereupon.

9. Help us therefore to acknowledge thee in all our ways, and not to lean to our own understandings. Teach us, blessed God, so to number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom ; and to mind those things which are in conjunction with our everlasting welfare. Take us out of an earthly and worldly spirit, and give us senses spiritually exercised, that we may savour and relish, judge and discern, the ways and things of God. O, let us be always under thy communication and influence ; so in the light of thy countenance attract and draw us to thyself ; and stay us with thee ; and suffer us never to depart from thee, upon any temptation, provocation, or suggestion whatsoever.

O Lord, communicate thy light to our minds, thy life to our souls : as thou art original to us by thy creation of us, so be thou also final by our intention of thee.

10. Go over the workmanship of thy creation in us again : to mend all the defects we have contracted, and to destroy out of us, by the working of thy grace and spirit, whatsoever we have acquired unnatural to thy creation of us. Transform us into the image of thy son, conform us to his likeness, make us, body and soul, an habitation for thyself, by thy holy spirit.

Make thy son to us, all which thou hast appointed him to be unto sinners. Make him to us wisdom, that we who have played the fool, by consenting to iniquity, and giving our good God an offence, may better understand ourselves in the great concerns of our souls. Make him to us righteousness, that we may be out of danger, by reason of the deserved punishment of our sin. Make him to us sanctification, that we who have marred our spirits, and spoiled our principles, by unnatural use, may inwardly be made whole, and renewed in the spirit of our minds.

Make

Make him to us redemption, that we may be set at liberty, and delivered from the tyranny of sin and Satan, who hath many times led us captive.

11. We thank thee for the happy terms of the covenant of grace ; terms that are good in themselves, and fit for thy creatures, such as our own hearts cannot desire better, or other. For, what is it that the Lord our God doth require of us, but only those things which are necessary to our everlasting welfare ? Neither hast thou denied us any thing but what is for our hurt and prejudice. O, bring us into thy good terms, and suffer us not herein to fail, or fall short.

12. We bless thee for that good hand which thou hast held over us by day and by night, at home and abroad, alone and in company ; that thou hast put away evil things from us, and conferred many good things upon us in great kindness, tenderness, and compassion. For, either the evil things that threatened us, have not come at all ; or if they have come, they have not continued so long as we suspected, nor have been so great as we imagined ; or else thou hast over-ruled them, subdued and turned them unto good ; and for good things, thou hast even transcended our hopes, and exceeded our expectations. O, be thou endeared and recommended to us by thy goodness, kindness and faithfulness ; and let us be engaged unto thee in duty and affection, that so with choice and delight we may live to that God by whom we live.

13. We thank thee, that we have the use of our reason and understanding, in which many fail, that we have power of self-enjoyment, and taking content in our lives ; that thou hast given us power to choose and determine ourselves ; and that thou hast permitted our choice.

We

We acknowledge, that if in any thing our conditions are better or easier than the conditions of those that are most miserable and necessitous, that herein the goodness of the Lord our God hath been extended towards us : for we have used ourselves as venturously, and run as many hazards, as others ; and but for thy gracious interposure, we might have been as miserable as others.

14. Acquaint us, blessed God, in this day of our exercise, probation and trial, with the employment of eternity, (conversation with our God by holy meditation, by heavenly ejaculations, by constant intention of God, his honour, and service ; by exact walking according to the difference of good and evil ; and by frequent application to thee by prayer, and all other holy exercises) that so when these frail bodies of ours shall fall away and tumble into the dust, and leave our souls alone, and when there shall be no more either of bodily employment, or concernment : that our souls may then readily adjoin themselves unto these immediate attendants upon God, the angels and saints in glory ; and in that blessed consort spend eternity, in singing praises and hallelujahs to that God, of whose grace and goodness we have had so great experience all along in life.

15. Help us so to order our conversation in the world, so to govern our spirits, and to lead such lives, upon which we may safely die ; and when we shall come to leave the world, afford us such a mighty power and presence of thy own good spirit, that we may have solid consolation in believing, and depart in the faith of God's elect. That we may escape the dreadful pangs of death, all consternation of mind, all confusion of thoughts, all doubtfulness and uncertainty concerning our everlasting condition ; that so we may chearfully follow thee into the estate on the other side death, of which thou hast given us so great assurance



assurance by the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, and who hath promised to change these our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working of his mighty power, by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself: and, Lord, give us in the mean time in faith and patience to possess our souls.

16. We are daily admonished, as by years growing upon some of us, so by experience and observation abroad every day, one or other taken away from our society, converse and acquaintance; and sometimes persons of fewer years, and of greater strength, and more likely to live than ourselves: neither do we know how it comes to pass that we survive them, nor how long it will be, ere we shall follow them, nor yet what matter of diseases may be gathering together, in these base and vile bodies of ours, which tho' we feel them not to-day, may appear tomorrow. Lord, keep us in consideration hereof, and the reference of time to eternity, to apply our hearts unto wisdom; and to mind those things that are in conjunction with our everlasting welfare.

17. And superadd this to all the grace and favour thou hast shewn us all along in life, not to remove us hence, but with all advantages for eternity; when we shall be in a due preparation of mind, in a holy disposition of soul, in a perfect renunciation of the guise of this mad and sinful world; when we shall be entirely resigned up unto thee our God; when we shall have clear acts of faith in God by Jesus Christ in our souls; high and reverential thoughts of thee in our minds; enlarged and inflamed affections towards thee.

18. Wherefore, blessed God, consummate the work of thy grace which thou hast begun in our souls; perfect

fect the cure thou hast begun upon our minds ; and then when thou shalt have brought us to glory, we who through our earthliness, carnality, and folly, have been weary of a little attendance upon thee, in time, shall think eternity itself too strait and too narrow for us to bless and magnify so good a God, so well deserving at our hands.

19. Do good unto the whole world, recover thy lapsed creation, compassionate the forlorn condition of mankind, lost in themselves, and lost to God, through ignorance, stupidity, and senselessness, where persons have never been awakned ; through superstition, idolatry, and false worship, wherein many have been nursed up and bred ; through atheism, dissoluteness, and profaneness, whereby they have made havock of conscience.

20. O let the light of the glorious gospel of Christ break forth and shine throughout the whole world : fulfil the promise thou has made unto the Messiah, that thou wilt give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession : that the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and that the leopard shall ly down with the kid, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; that they shall not hurt nor destroy in all thy holy mountain : but that there may be a perfect dwelling together in love, harmony, and reconciliation with the whole creation.

21. Reform all things amiss in these kingdoms : controul atheism, irreligion and profaneness : establish peace, truth, and righteousness : frustrate all naughty designs : suffer us not to be hurried back again to popery, superstition, or any false worship ; but settle us in the purity of our religion, and our just rights.

Restrain the sons of violence, that turn all into confusion, and that make havock and desolation in the family of God.

22. Direct

22. Direct him whom thou hast placed on the throne &c. furnish him with all divine gifts, and graces that may sanctify his soul here, and save him hereafter. Bless him and us in all his royal family, &c.

23. Compassionate all in misery and affliction; especially such whose cases we are acquainted with: comfort, help and restore, O Lord, be thou a present help to them in any needful time of trouble: such as lie upon sick beds; direct those that are about them to proper and fit means for their recovery, and add thy blessing: take not them nor us out of this state, till thou hast fitted and qualified us for the state of immortality, eternity and glory.

24. Assist us now in the service we are met to perform, that we beginning in the name and fear of God, may be promoted by divine assistance, encouraged by thy acceptance, and end in thy glory, and the advantage of our immortal souls.

Grant that which shall be now spoken according to thy will, may be received as from thyself, and turned to the information of our understandings, wherein any of us have been mistaken; the refining of our spirits; the right ordering the actions of our lives and conversations; that God in all things may be glorified; and our souls finally saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we are bold to call thee father, &c.

